How does Johann Sebastian Bach vary his approach to fugal composition in his organ works? : A study of fourteen strategically selected organ fugues.

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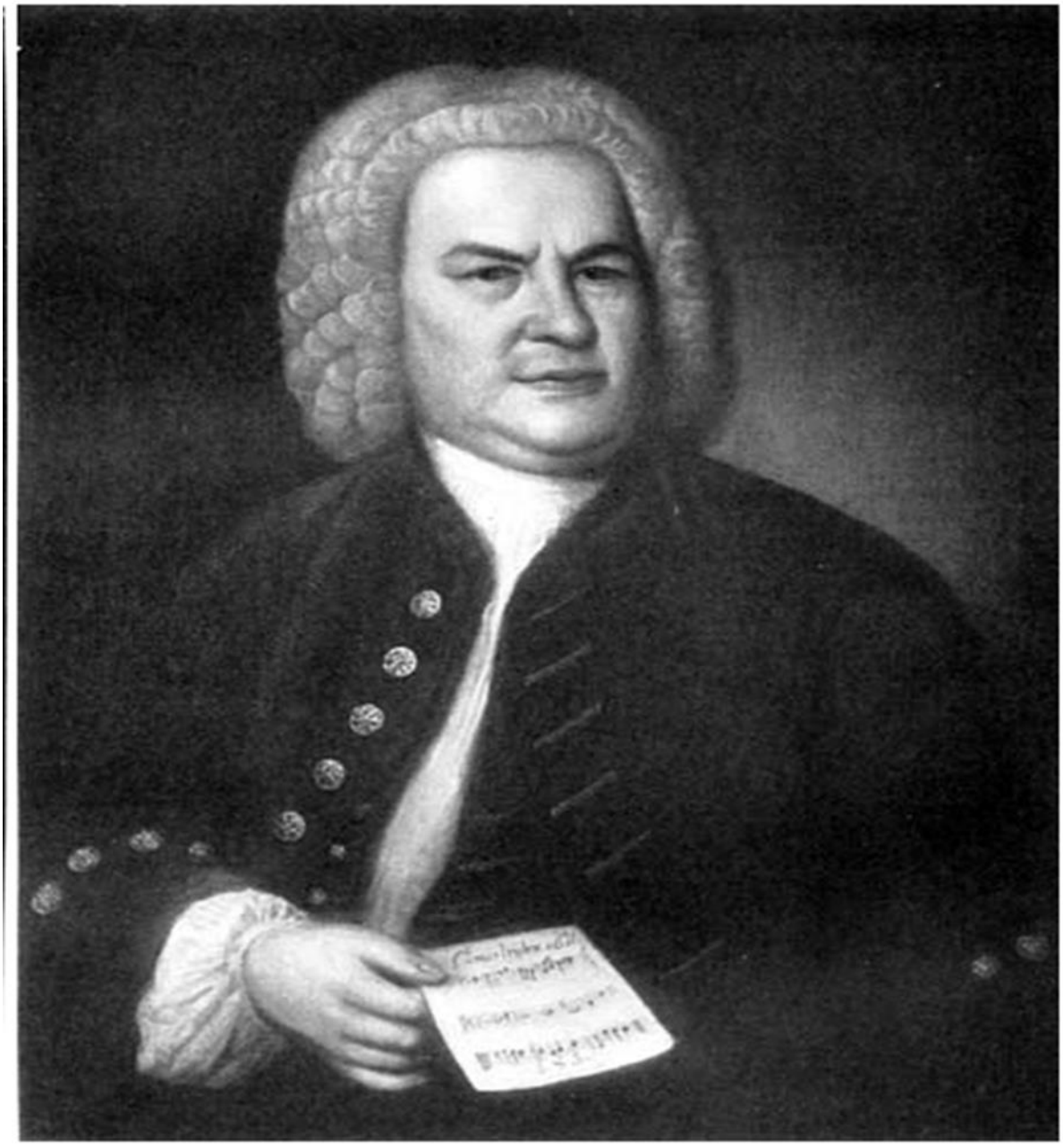

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Contents

Abstract

The thesis commences with an introduction examining the external influences and the work ethic of J.S. Bach. The first aim, albeit subsidiary to the subsequent aim, is to magnify and raise the issues concerning the lacuna of fugal analytical methodology and the underwhelming quality of analytical literature on the J.S. Bach organ works. As such, the misconception of fugal terminology, the lax analytical interpretations and the lack of cogent and compelling analytical accounts are all addressed.

The second aim which is integral to each analytical account of the fourteen fugues is to elucidate the contrapuntal paradigms and matrices contained therein. As of yet, attempts have not been made to provide rational schematic tables which illustrate the subject and countersubject(s) entries. Indeed, it is then of profound importance to examine each of these fourteen fugues and distil precisely the compositional procedures and mechanisms they possess. The fourteen fugues have not been selected without reasoning; they have also been selected to reveal a likely chronology. Fundamentally, they each reveal a vast spectrum of compositional traits, origins and hallmarks that are unique to each. The overarching purpose is thus to provide an enlightened comprehension as to the compositional procedures that define the essence of each fugue.

Despite the fervour for J.S. Bach as a composer of outstanding calibre and how highly regarded the organ works are held, it is surprising that for in excess of two hundred and fifty years, the compositional procedures and structural designs of his organ works have yet to be fully understood. Whilst this thesis does not aim to provide an in - depth analytical account of each bar within each fugue, it nonetheless seeks to provide a cohesive account for the fourteen fugues and above all to reinforce that fugue is a radically varying compositional style.

How does Johann Sebastian Bach vary his approach to fugal composition in his organ works? : A study of fourteen strategically selected organ fugues.

INTRODUCTION

While many musical forms within the extensive oeuvre of J. S. Bach (1685-1750) have received considerable scrutiny such as the dance forms, the concertos and the cantatas, it is the essentially contrapuntal forms, especially fugue, that have not yet been subjected to the same detailed study, nor has any theoretical approach been postulated in order for us to understand them in any systematic manner. Whereas established theories exist of Concerto, Sonata Form, Rondo and the inter-related Rondo Sonata, none exists for the purposes of analysing Fugue. Consequently, the fugues of J.S. Bach (hereafter, 'Bach'), many of which are greatly admired and revered, have never been properly subjected to any form of technical study, nor has there been any search of a rationale for their construction or cohesion. 'Fugue' as a form in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries took many guises, but in North Germany, especially in the hands of Bach, it became a refined and intellectual idiom in which thematic material and key interacted in an increasingly complex and cerebral fashion. However, there has been little attempt to elucidate the various stages of Bach's fugal processes in the organ works, such as the exposition, episodes, *stretti*, use of pedal points, the role of thematic material (whether monothematic or contrasting) in the context of countersubject, episode, and on a more detailed level, the use of contrapuntal paradigms such as triple invertible counterpoint and their influence upon the larger structure. Such criteria are of course relevant to all of Bach's fugal literature but an acute and analytical appreciation of the organ fugues has yet to be fulfilled. Fugue through the intellect of Bach manifested itself through so many of his compositions that no other composer preceding or succeeding Bach can claim to have used such a form so abundantly.

Why fourteen fugues?

The purpose of this thesis is, therefore, to analyse fourteen selected organ fugues by Bach, each of which exemplifies an evolution and modification in style, and to establish a chronological guide to the evolution of Bach's fugal compositions, and indeed the essence of change in the compositions. While the fourteen fugues under scrutiny bear the label 'fugue', what will become evident is that each reveals a different set of processes, and each contributes to an emerging style of sophistication and complexity in which Bach excelled. Unlike the majority of the keyboard works which were either published as a collection or were written within relatively close proximity of one another, the organ works and the specific fugues therein span almost fifty years of Bach's compositional career and as

such, they provide overwhelming evidence for radical differences in compositional approach. Consequently, the fourteen fugues have been chosen carefully so as to provide not only a possible chronological order but more importantly and indeed ultimately, the intention is to cast far greater clarity and to elucidate the compositional mechanisms within these works which for so long have not received the analytical attention that is needed so as to comprehend the artistic and architectural designs. 'Bach's name is more readily associated with fugue than with any other mode of composition. Even his earliest works show a preoccupation with fugal writing, and the skill they already exhibit supports his son's observation that, he became even in his youth a pure and strong fugue writer.'[1]

The influence of other composers upon Bach's compositions

So as to comprehend where Bach absorbed such a rigorous and steadfast approach to his fugal compositions and indeed the approach adopted within these selected organ fugues, one must examine the influence of other composers. Some of these composers were of course eminent musicians and composers during Bach's early years such as Johan Pachelbel (1653-1706) or Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707). At the same time, Bach endorsed the essence of vocal polyphony and instrumental works by Italian composers such as Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1643) or Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713). In addition, Bach was also familiar with contemporary composers further afield. In particular, Bach showed affection towards the organ music of François Couperin (1668-1733) as well as the oratorios by George Frederic Handel (1685-1759). As such, the fourteen fugues which will be analysed have been influenced by an expansive and extensive knowledge of compositional genres. However, such yearning for compositional originality and integrity of course had to be kindled and supplemented in the first instance.

> On 31 August 2006 the discovery of the earliest known Bach autographs was announced, one of them (a copy of Reincken's famous chorale fantasia An Wasserflüssen Babylon) signed "Il Fine â Dom. Georg: Böhme descriptum ao. 1700 Lunaburgi". The "Dom." may suggest either "domus" (house) or "dominus" (master), but in any case it proves that Bach knew Böhm personally.[2]

Georg Böhm (1661-1733) is primarily regarded as developing the style of the Chorale Partita – a contrasting multi-movement work all based upon the same chorale. The importance of thematic and harmonic variation was to be of profound influence in Bach's subsequent fugal writing and it is therefore not surprising that Bach composed his own set of Chorale partitas (BWV 766, 767, 768 and

[1] Jones, Richard, *The Creative development of Johan Sebastian Bach Vol .1* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) p.49
[2] Williams, Peter, *J.S. Bach: A Life In Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) p.375

770) in the early 1700s. It is highly likely that BWV 766 (Christ, der du bist der helle Tag) was composed when Bach was at Luneburg under the direct tutelage of Böhm and the other partitas were composed soon after. In any case, there is a direct link to the tutelage of Böhm and this undoubtedly provided a catalyst for Bach to begin an extensive study of Böhm's other organ works, many of which were fugues:

> It needs little more than a glance at Böhm's partitas on 'Auf meinem leiben Gott' to discover how deeply the old master influenced Bach, for here is the same verse by verse treatment following a simply harmonized statement of the tune with an extended version in the first partita; the colouring of the melody by ornamentation and its breaking up into short figures. Essentially, Bach's treatment is Böhm's.[3]

The account of how Bach travelled to Lübeck by foot to visit the ageing Dietrich Buxtehude is not mythical but fact. Moreover, the early organ fugues such as BWV 531 (ii) or BWV 532 (ii) owe much to the *stylus phantasticus* for which Buxtehude was a remarkable exponent. On the one hand, *stylus phantasticus* was an improvisatory style but really the primary function of the *stylus phantasticus* was to empower the music with a strong sense of dramatic rhetoric. This term was not just applied to freely composed preludes without a more rigid form of structure, but also to the fugues.

Looking to other influences, Bach was familiar with the music of Girolamo Frescobaldi – the *Fiori Musicali* of 1635 inspired composers throughout Europe. The three masses contained therein are of particular interest as several movements are *Ricercares* (the Italian verb *ricercare* translates as 'to search'). The *Ricercare* was to have a profound effect on Bach's fugal writing and can most certainly be considered as a precursor of the fugue. Whilst Bach never travelled outside Germany, his ability to absorb and synthesise genres was formidable and this is an area of study in itself. Notable influences included those of the Italian *Concerti Grossi* of Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713) and Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741). The French opera-ballets by Jean-Philip Rameau (1683-1764) and Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-87) were also to have a profound effect, along with the two masses for organ by François Couperin 'Le Grande' (1668-1733). One substantial work which J.S. Bach was known to have copied by hand in 1713 was *Livre d'Orgue* published in 1699 by Nicolas de Grigny (1672-1703). Both Couperin and de Grigny represented the apotheosis of French Baroque organ music. In Germany, the influence of opera by composers such as Reinhard Keiser (1674-1739), and in England the music of George Frederick Handel (1685-1759), were to have further impact on Bach's writing. Arguably, the greatest single testimony to all these genres is Bach's B Minor Mass (BWV 232) which was not written for liturgical use and is a unique work. The influences of the above composers can all be witnessed in the organ fugues, and it is arguable that the fugues are a nutshell for all the influential factors in Bach's life.

[3] Taylor, Stainton de B, 'Bach's Chorale Partitas' in *The Musical Times Vol.96 No.1348* June 1955, p. 315

Lutheranism as a catalyst for creativity

The contributing factor of Bach's Lutheran faith cannot be ignored. It was to have a profound impact on his music whether through a disciplined approach to composition or indeed captivating and personifying religious images and meanings through music. Indeed, fugue served as a vehicle of religious expression. It must have undoubtedly been a life – long influence to have been born, tutored and to have sung in the same surroundings as Martin Luther.

> Hewn out of the same wooded landscape, both he and Luther had attended the same Latin school and both had had some of their earliest experiences of music in this church (Georgenkirche, Eisenach). Luther's presence is most strongly to be felt in a tiny room with a high ceiling in the Wartburg, the medieval castle that towers over the town, skirted by woods where he used to pick wild strawberries as a boy.[4]

Such a bucolic but nevertheless striking sentiment must have been a deep inspiration for the young Bach and for him to have become intrinsically aware of the founder of his religion can only have further strengthened his belief. Of course, some would argue how this could possibly influence fugal composition. Firstly, Bach's faith and his desire to magnify its meaning through music provided a catalyst for industry. Secondly, Bach was a servant of God and his ethic at the workbench was one of perfection. Thirdly, music was not a mechanical process – it was a gift, and a gift which was nurtured that could convey so much of not only what it was like to be human but also to offer a glimpse as to what life beyond may represent. In some ways, Bach can be considered a mediator – which other composer has portrayed religion so vividly and abundantly in music?

The complexity and beauty of Bach's music often leaves one wondering how such heights could ever be scaled, yet it is known that Bach stated in his later years, 'that which I have achieved by industry and practice, anyone else with tolerable natural gift and ability can also achieve.' [5] The critic and aesthetician Johan Adolph Scheibe in *Dercritische Musicus VI*, 14th May, 1737, p.36, readily criticised Bach, 'Bach's music is indeed filled with an excess of art, his pieces are extremely difficult to perform'.[6] The so-called 'excess of art' (from the German *Schwulst*) refers to a sense of turgidity. There is no denying the fact that Bach's music represents the apotheosis of Baroque counterpoint in not just the keyboard works but his entire oeuvre. As such, Bach is unique because no other composer specialised and endorsed counterpoint, and of course fugue, to such extreme levels.

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[4] Gardiner, John Eliot**,** *Music in the Castle of Heaven a portrait of Johann Sebastian Bach* (London, Allen Lane, 2013) p.126

[5] Gardiner, John Eliot, *Music in the Castle of Heaven a portrait of Johann Sebastian Bach* (London, Allen Lane, 2013) p.80

[6] Butt, John, **'**Bach's metaphysics of music', in *The Cambridge Companion to Bach,* ed. John Butt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.46-59 at p.55

Furthermore, they have not been, and are unlikely to be, surpassed. He possessed a remarkable gift to combine structure and beauty to create truly multi-dimensional music which appeals on so many different plains.

Fugal Nomenclature and Clarification of Definition

Turning now to the fundamentals of fugue, there is still confusion in academic and educational contexts as to how to define a fugue. Whilst this is not an attempt to re-define and re-evaluate the current nomenclature, it is worth highlighting the current fundamental weaknesses. Despite the title 'Fugue' being stated above each of these fourteen fugues under analytical scrutiny, the question 'what is a fugue?' can never be answered in precise detail as all fugues vary enormously in style, structure and stature. A possible initial solution to this is to turn the noun into a verb: it is possible to think of a *fugue* possessing a subject which is 'fugued'. The term *fugue* derives from the Latin *'fugare'* (to cause to flee). Thus, a subject which is 'fugued' is a much clearer term. The subject evolves through many rhetorical manifestations, not only through related keys, but also using techniques such as *Stretto (* the rapid succession of entries throughout the voices), *Inversion* (the subject is melodically inverted), *Canon* (two or more subjects are set against one another at a specific interval of time), *Rhythmic Diminution* (the note values are decreased), *Rhythmic Augmentation* (the note values are increased), *Cancrizans* (the use of retrograde). All of the aforementioned appear throughout (though not all necessarily in the same fugue) Bach's fugues and in numerous combinations, i.e. two or more of these techniques can be combined at once. There are no rules that dictate when any of the above should occur. In most 'fugues' which are not composed by Bach, the aforementioned techniques are not so common. However, Bach was a unique composer in that 'fugue' was arguably his greatest compositional genre. It manifests itself in practically all his instrumental works, even for what are normally regarded as monophonic solo instruments: the Prelude No.5 in C Minor (BWV 1011) from the unaccompanied cello suites latterly evolves into a fugue.

> It contains very few chords; harmony and multiple voicing is, for the most part, implied, but noticeable just the same due to Bach's remarkable gift for creating expectation and a certain sense of inevitability in voicing. In other words, he sets up the progression of the music so that our brains capture the sense of the harmony and multiple voicing, even though throughout most of this fugue Bach has written only one musical line at any given time.[7]

In the vast majority of cases, a fugue is always paired by Bach with a preceding Fantasia, Prelude or a Toccata. These all vary considerably style but more often than not, fugal elements can also be found within these genres. Whilst this factor will be examined significantly with regards to the organ

[7] Costanza, Christopher, *The Cello Suites of J.S. Bach* (Online programme notes, Stanford University, 2012)

works, a formidable example from *The Well - Tempered Clavier* is the Prelude No. VII in Eb Major from Book 1 (BWV 852). The prelude is effectively tri-partite – it opens with a seemingly improvised toccata. This is duly followed by a brief fugue in the style of a *ricercare*. The final section has two fugal subjects which are practically inseparable. Yet, all of this has simply been labelled as 'prelude'. Unfortunately, these generic terms are not satisfactory as they provide no real definition as to what is going on in the music: they are merely labels for convenience.

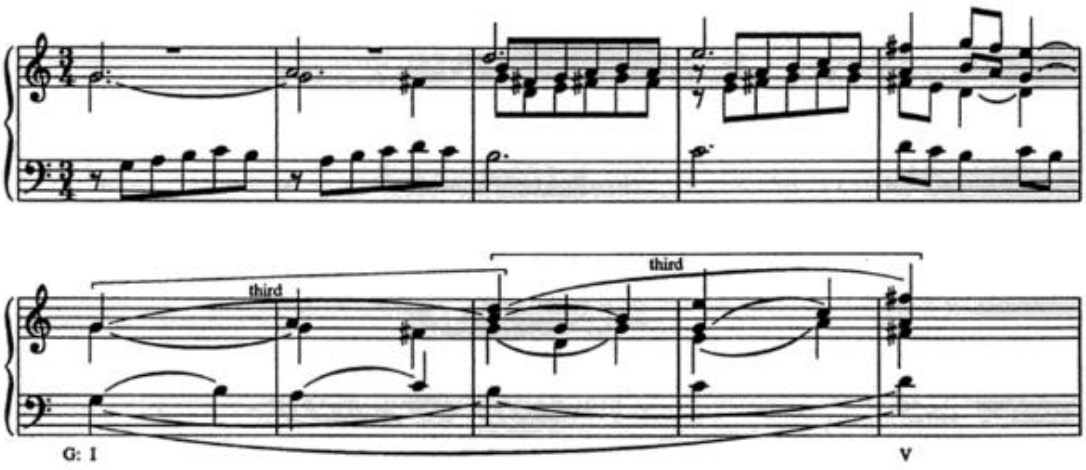
Perhaps one question which must be answered immediately is, 'how to create a compelling analysis of a fugue?' Despite fugue and imitative counterpoint having been existence since the 16th Century, there is not one definitive solution as to how these works are to be analysed. Whilst the aim of this study is not to analyse each bar, it does nonetheless raise the issue that fugal analytical literature is weak. The *Schenkerian Analysis* is often used: this seasoned method serves its purpose and has a unique importance in the works of Haydn, Mozart and some of Beethoven, as it is able to disseminate the different layers within the compositional fabric. However, it is arguably inadequate for many of Bach's fugues as the following extract will illustrate: [8]

[8] Renwick, William, *Analysing Fugue: A Schenkerian Approach* (New York, Pendragon Press, 1995) p.74

Illustration No.1 – The Opening of BWV 672. Extracted directly *from Analysing Fugue a Schenkerian Approach*

Other nonconforming subjects are *prius factus* phrases of chorales which are adopted as *fugato* themes for chorale preludes. For example, the subject of Bach's *Manualiter* "*Kyrie, Gott Vater in Ewigkeit*" BWV 672, in E Phrygian, is $\hat{3}$ - $\hat{4}$ - $\hat{5}$, and the answer is $\hat{7}$ - $\hat{1}$ - sharp - $\hat{2}$. As example 2-70 shows, this configuration produces an exposition that prolongs G, rather than the modal *finalis*, E.[56]

Example 2-70. Bach, *Kyrie, Gott Vater in Ewigkeit* BWV 672, mm. 1–3



Whilst the above serves adequately as a mere harmonic reduction, it does absolutely nothing to illustrate the subtlety yet at the same time complexity of what *is actually* going on with regards to how the Chorale melody is incorporated, the invertibility of the rising quaver motif and indeed, the function of these within the work. Is the *cantus firmus* the subject or are the quavers the subject? Some would say they both are but in which case, where is the countersubject? What is missing from the above diagram is the title which Bach placed in the original, *Alio Modo:* 'in another manner'.

One aspect which of course Schenkerian Analysis does not take into account is that of rhythm. Bach is often referred to as 'the master of harmony' by countless people but ultimately it is the rhythm of any work that propels and defines the harmony for what it really is. Charles Burkhart (overleaf) makes clear the deficiencies of Schenkerian Analysis methods when considering the motivic intricacies contained within such works:

> One reason for this paucity [of literature on Schenkerian analysis of fugue] is simply that, because of the great complexity of the fugue, producing a persuasive graph of one (just like composing one) is among the most difficult of assignments. It has also been commonly assumed that, not being a form in the sense sonata is, and permitting such freedom and diversity of treatment, fugue does not readily lend itself to generalisation–more precisely, to the discovery of paradigms, normative patterns that recur in many works.[9]

The very nature of tonal music limits the harmonic resources – there are only a fixed (albeit many) number of chords which one can exhibit. Bach's harmonic language is by no means revolutionary and is most perfectly understandable to his predecessors and successors. What is revolutionary, however, is Bach's ability to conjure musical ideas and to use these to create his own polyphonic mosaic.

With regards to the meaning of double fugue, or triple fugue (or indeed further permutations), there are further issues of definition here too. A double fugue is often prescribed with two definitions. The first relates to having two subjects which are practically interlocked and always appear together. In essence, the subject is stated and the countersubject that follows is always regular and follows the same melodic contour. The second definition concerns two independent subjects, each must have their own exposition, but still all occurs within one 'fugue'. There are fugues by Bach which do follow the above rubric, but more often than not, the issue is more complex. Thus, the permeability of these definitions is considerable and what follows are various permutations and variations on the label 'double fugue'. Although the following two fugues (BWV 537 (ii) and BWV 574) are organ works, they will not be included in the fourteen selected fugues which will be analysed in greater detail in due course. These are merely illustrations of the term 'double fugue' and serve only to provide an overview of the structure as a whole.

1. The first fugue under scrutiny, Fugue in C Minor BWV 537 (ii) has led to various analyses – many of which are weak. Among the most flawed is how the second exposition is unlikely to be composed by Bach as the subject is chromatic. This is questionable. The overall structure is one of considerable interest not least because of the quasi *Da Capo* but the outline is as follows:

   Table No.1 – The Tri-partite distinction of BWV 537 (ii).

Section	Bar numbers
Primary Fugue	bb.1 - 56
Secondary Fugue	bb.57 - 104
Da Capo (based upon Primary Fugue albeit much shorter)	bb.105 – 130

[9] Burkhart, Charles, 'A Review of Analysing Fugue: A Schenkerian Approach, by William Renwick' in *Music Analysis, Blackwell Press 16/2* (1997) p.270

There are undeniably two separate expositions and the subjects (see illustrations below) are never combined. To this extent, there are two separate fugues followed by a *da capo* of the first fugue within the overall framework.

Illustration No.2 a – BWV 537 (ii) – bb.1-5 – Primary exposition

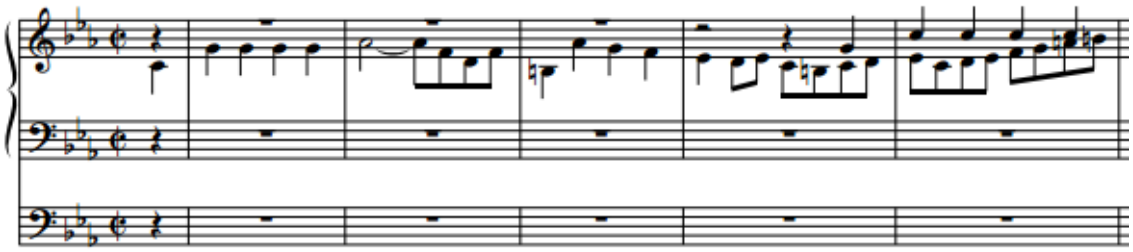
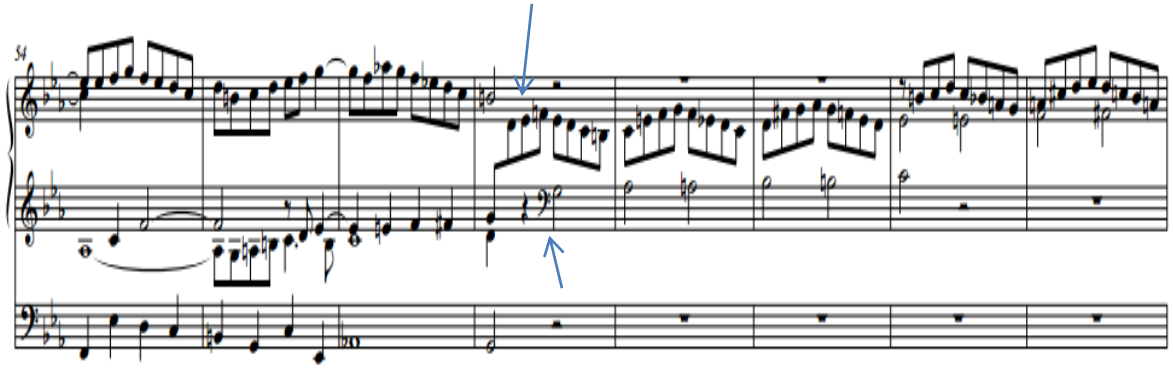


Illustration No.2 b – BWV 537 (ii) – bb.57 – 64 – Secondary exposition



As the preceding table illustrates, this fugue is distinctly tri-partite: it seems there are three independent sections. The Primary exposition is based upon the subject as depicted in Illustration No.2 a. With regards to the Secondary exposition, there is a chromatic subject but at the same time there is also a recurring counter-subject. Consequently, one could argue that there are three subjects within this fugue. What kind of double fugue is this, or is it even a triple fugue? Unfortunately, these labels do nothing to help with the interpretation. Rather, the following very brief overview would serve to be more helpful as an explanation: a tri-partite fugue, the primary exposition contains one principle subject. The secondary exposition contains two subjects which are interlocked and texturally invertible. The quasi *Da Capo* is a much shortened version of the primary exposition.

Looking now to the second example, the Fugue in C Minor on a theme by Giovanni Legrenzi (1626-1690), BWV 574, provides another definition of 'double fugue'. It is an early work and illustrates Bach's study of Italian trio sonata textures. The two themes which are central to the

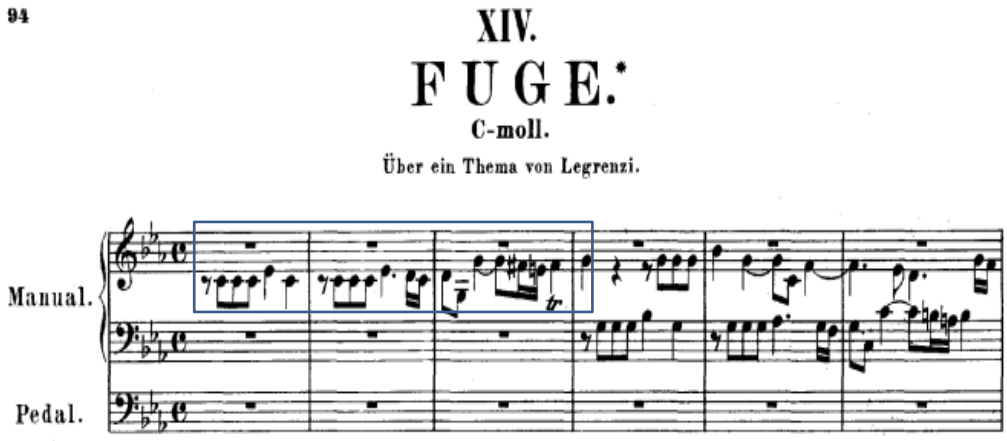
construction of this fugue are taken from Legrenzi's Trio Sonata in G Minor, Op.2 No.11. There are four distinct sections to this fugue – each of these will be highlighted briefly.

Table No.2 – The Tri-partite fugal construction of BWV 574 and the Cadenza.

Section	Bar Numbers
Primary Fugue	b.1 - 37
Secondary Fugue	b.37 - 70
Tertiary Fugue	b.70 - 104
Cadenza	b.104 - 118

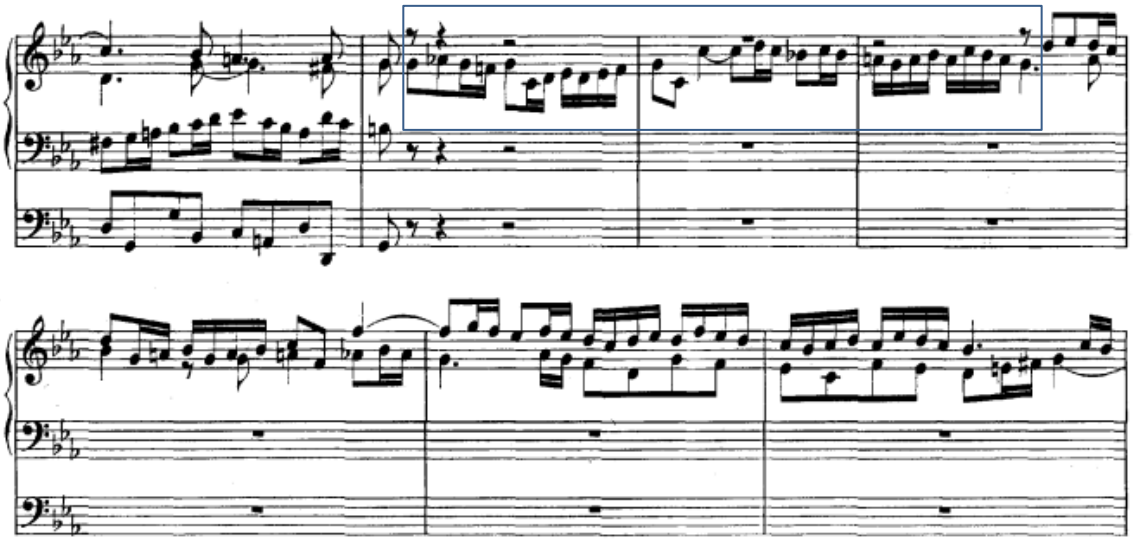
The primary fugue, opening with Subject *X,* does not have a regular countersubject and is a fugue for four voices.

Illustration No.3 a – BWV 574 – bb.1 – 6.



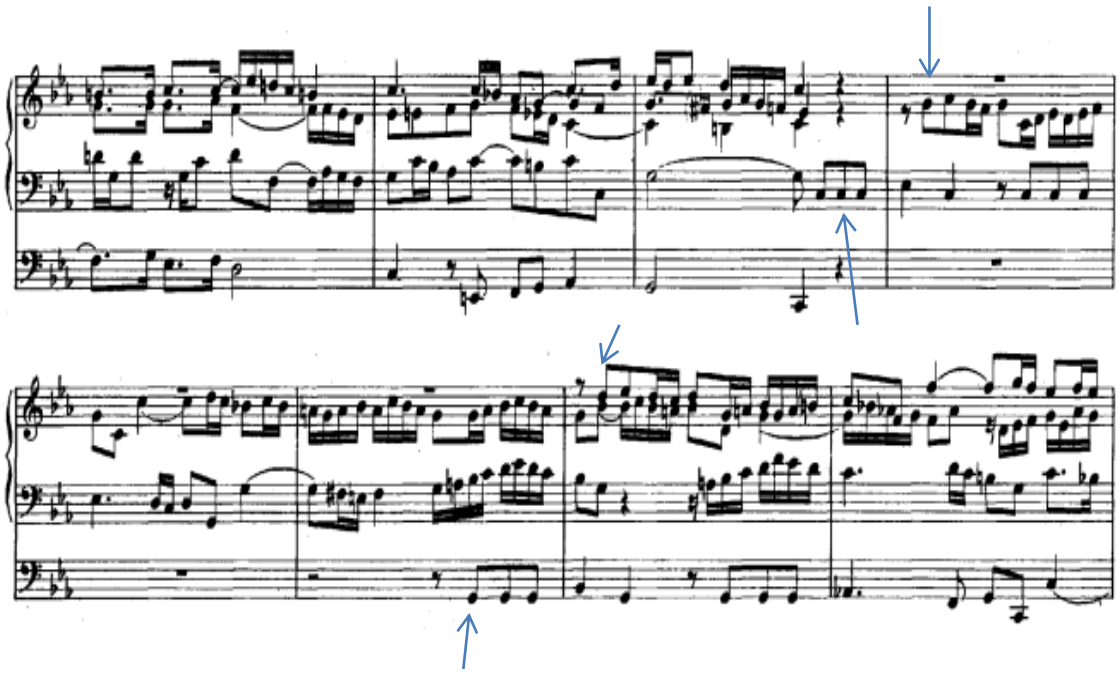
The secondary fugue (see overleaf) that follows therein begins at b.37 with Subject *Y* with a stylistically contrasting subject. There is no thematic relation between the first and second expositions; there are two separate fugal expositions.

Illustration No.3 b – BWV 574 - bb.36 – 42.



What follows thereafter, is of particular structural interest. A third exposition now occurs with both of the subjects aforementioned being thematically pertinent to the design. As such, this third exposition uses Subject *X* as the primary subject whilst Subject *Y* is the regular countersubject.

Illustration No.3 c – BWV 574 - bb.68 – 75 – The third section of the fugue with Subject *X* and Subject *Y* in conjunction.



As illustrated, there are four distinct sections to this fugue. The primary and secondary fugues are thematically independent of one another, and can be regarded as separate. The tertiary fugue unites the two subjects. The coda follows thereafter. Curiously, all of this comes under the umbrella title

'Fugue in C Minor'. These two examples provide more than enough evidence to suggest that the term 'double fugue' or 'triple fugue' can cause significant confusion, and if possible, should be avoided. There are many more examples which will illustrate the point further and some of these will be examined in the fourteen fugal analyses. One point briefly worth making again is that many of Bach's other works even though they are not labelled fugue do contain fugal passages (fugato), or do resemble the compositional processes often associated with fugal composition. When one considers 'fugue' no other composer has ever delved so deeply into the art of writing such compositions, and Bach can arguably be considered the greatest exponent of the genre. It seems that he almost had an obsession with the genre, and that he wanted to prove not only that he could match the quality craftsmanship of his forefathers, but also that he could surpass them. With Bach, fugue becomes a vehicle of expression, rhetoric and intellect, which is a far cry from simply writing for several voices, each chasing one another through related keys, as one so often finds when fugue is used as a tool for practice.

The Importance of Intricacy

Fugue as a compositional genre is revered for its technical command and intricate detail. Such traits required a mind that was meticulous and articulate in expression and thus, the craft of music was not a question of providing merely adequate music but rather, it was a question of providing refined and distilled thought processes.

> He (Bach) had a vision to bring to God, in worship, music of superior quality. He wasn't content to give Him second best in his creativity, and he wasn't content to just let Church be average. Along with this, his personal integrity and expectation of himself was commensurate with Godly Christian values of a work-ethic not based on pleasing man, but on pleasing God. To him it didn't matter if man revered him or disdained him because it wasn't man he was ultimately working for.[10]

Unlike Bach's infamous contemporary, G.F. Handel who had so many resources (a substantial income, royalties, art collection), Bach could barely support his family with the meagre income from the *Thomasschule* in Leipzig. Handel undoubtedly appealed to the public, but the music of Bach often caused controversy. Moreover, Bach was undeniably old fashioned in his compositional outlook, particularly with his final works which arguably begin after the publication of *Clavier Übung II* (1735), and with *Clavier Übung III* (1739) there is much reference to the *stile antico* – Palestrina / Caldera / Monteverdi. The final eleven years see Bach looking not to his daily work but rather defining his testimony on harmony and counterpoint. Bach's level of contrapuntal and compositional complexity often leaves people wondering how such levels of sophistication could be

[10]Hohstadt, Lowell, 'Ten Lessons J.S. Bach taught me', in *Excellence in Music and Worship* (Online article)

obtained. The more one examines his works, and in this case, the organ fugues, the more one has to be on the same or at least similar frequency.

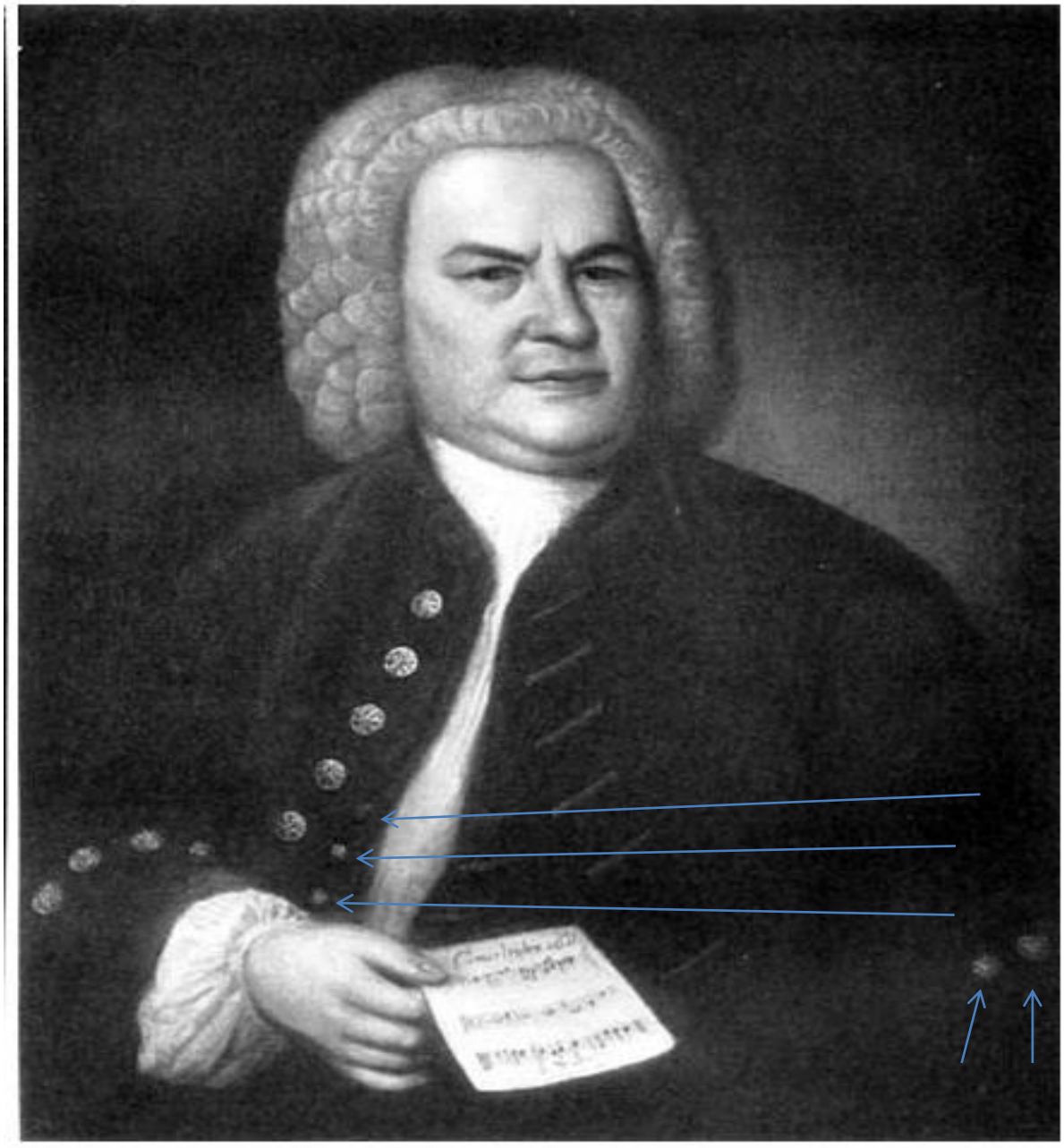
> The music of J. S. Bach has provided a fertile field for analysis ever since early Enlightenment authors such as Kirnberger and Marpurg began to treat Bach as a special fount of harmonic wisdom. Indeed, one of the pleasures in studying Bach's music is to grasp the complex construction so closely connected with its depth and beauty. On the other hand, the famous complexity of so much of Bach's music becomes remarkably transparent as soon as one discovers the relevant building blocks on which a particular genre of music is erected.[11]

For Bach, fugue was an exhibition of craftsmanship, symbolism and affection. Whilst little is known about the character of Bach, it is highly likely that the greatest clues are to be found within his music. Unlike his contemporaries such as Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767), whose music is certainly well constructed and relatively satisfying, it sometimes lacks dramatic impetus and a sense that the music can leave and/or create a distinct impression upon the mind. There is no doubt that Bach's life was marred by tragedy, not least by the untimely demise of his first wife, but also of the countless children who died in youth. Family tragedies were in abundance and served as a constant reminder to Bach of man's mortality. That Bach himself lived until 66 years of age is remarkable, and indeed he out-lived several of his children. Bach's music becomes increasingly multi-dimensional throughout his career, as if reflecting the many different influences through the years.

The famous, but not particularly well documented, portrait of Bach by the Leipzig artist Elias Gottlieb Haussmann in 1746 is of great interest as the portrait arguably teaches those who examine it to think like Bach. To the lay member of the public, it is a picture of quite an old composer with a piece of music.

[11]Dreyfus, Laurence**,** 'Bachian Invention and its mechanisms' in *The Cambridge Companion to Bach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.171 – 192 at p.172

Illustration No.4 a – The original of the Elias Gottlieb Haussmann Portrait – 1746.



Upon looking at the picture, little can be distinguished about the personality of Bach – his face lacks much expression. However, this is the mind-set of Bach – 'seek and ye will find'. The portrait was submitted in 1746 so that Bach could validate his membership of the Mizler society – a society which promoted both the co-existence of science and music. It was well known that Bach delayed his membership deliberately so that he could become the 14th member. The number '14' is of great significance as the letters within the name BACH (A =1, B = 2 etc.) add up to '14'. A lot of theories exist with regards to numeracy and symbolism within the music of Bach, and several references can

be found within the organ fugues. Looking further into the above picture, if one counts the number of visible buttons, there appear to be '14'. Further reference to the number '14' includes the '14' *Contrapuncti* from the Art of Fugue, as well as the '14' Canons upon the bass line of the Goldberg Variations. Bach's own seal shows meticulous construction with 'JSB' superimposed upon its reverse.

Illustration No.4 b – The insignia of J.S. Bach

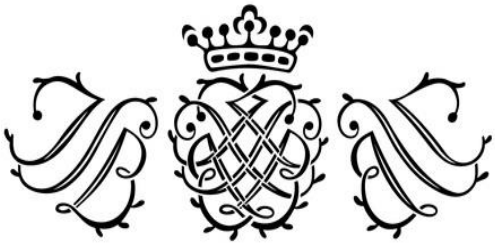
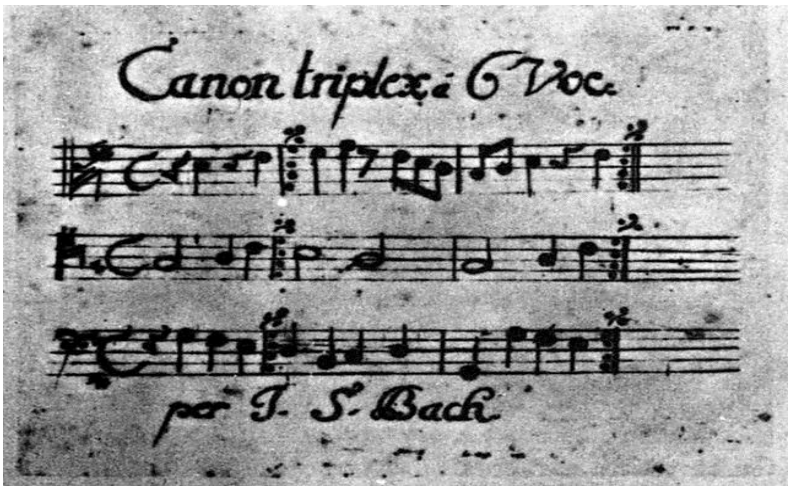


Illustration No.4 c – The insignia of J.S. Bach engraved on the crystal goblet inscribed *'Vivat'.*

The *Bachhaus* in Eisenach throughout March 2014 held a specific exhibition examining the significance of the number '14' in Bach's works and possessions: it was clearly of great importance in his life. The piece of manuscript which Bach holds in his right hand puzzled many historians and analysts until recently. The aforementioned '14' Canons were not discovered until 1974 in

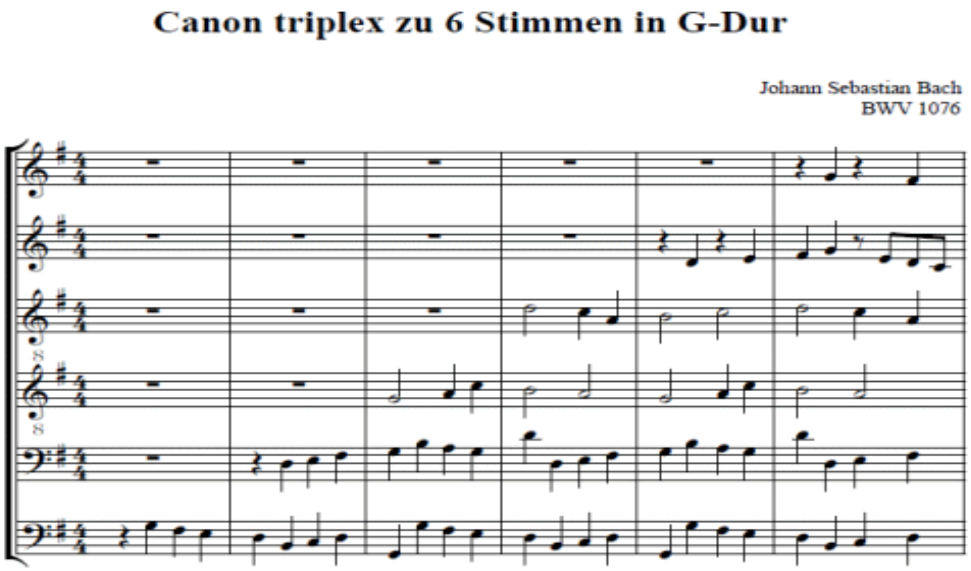
Strasbourg by Olivier Alain (1918-94). With regards to the manuscript, if one zooms in on the text, this is what is revealed:

Illustration No.5 – The manuscript which is held by Bach in the Haussmann portrait of 1746.



It is clear that there are only three voices yet obviously, it is intended for six. Therefore, something is deliberately missing or there is another answer. Looking back at the portrait, if one looks at the music from Bach's perspective, that is to say upside down, the solution becomes obvious. The following is what Bach really intended by the piece of music and indeed its final outcome:

Illustration No.5 b – The realisation (Triplex Canon) of the manuscript from the Haussmann portrait.



Consequently, this portrait reveals a lot of information if probed sufficiently, and it provides us with a unique insight as to how Bach thought when composing, and his extensive skill in the art of subtlety. Bach's music is often, if not always, carefully worked out, although on first listening the complexity is often masked. *Ars est celare artem:* the true skill is to hide the skill. This could not be more true of Bach. 'He was undoubtedly the greatest musical thinker of his age, someone who could see inventive potential in any theme and who relished working out his thoughts on paper.'[12]

The Limitations of Bach Biographies

Given the strong association with fugue that Bach enjoys today, the mention of his fugues and fugal processes receive little attention in the surviving and current biographical works. There is an inherent problem since the amount of surviving authentic material is frustratingly limited in scope. Yet the attempts at biography that exist in the literature since the nineteenth century provide relatively little in the way of analytical illumination on the subject of fugue. One of the reasons why so little is known about Bach is that no biographical publication about his life or works was published during his lifetime and as such, the evidence of his character and details concerning his methodology in his compositions has come about through information provided by his sons (notably C.P.E. Bach – 1714-88 and W.F. Bach 1710-84) and pupils such as Johan Friderich Agricola (1720-74) and Johan Ludwig Krebs (1713-80).

The first compiled evidence of Bach's life and some details about his compositions took form in a publication in 1754 entitled *Nekrolog* which featured in Lorenz Christoph Mizler's (1711-78) *Musikalische Bibliothek*. This publication was only distributed to relatively few people, almost to those exclusively in the Mizler Society (Bach was the fourteenth member of the Mizler Society in 1747) and as such, this publication is an obituary with details regarding the Bach musical dynasty, his appointments as a musician as well as a small amount of detail concerning some of his works. It is by no account an attempt to elucidate the compositional mechanisms of his works specifically or otherwise. The tone of the account is not one of remarkable profundity or intellect but rather, it aims to chronicle and highlight specific details. The following extract which has been translated, concerns the occasion when Bach had arranged to meet and contest with the French composer Louis Marchand (1669-1732).

[12]Butt, John, *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier* (Online Programme Notes for LINN Records, 2014).

> Bach showed up at the arena at the arranged time in the house of an elegant minister, where a large society of persons of high rank, of both genders, was gathered. Marchand kept them waiting for a long time. Finally the host sent somebody to the accommodation of Marchand to remind him, just in case he forgot, that it's now the time, to prove he is a man. However they figured out, taken by biggest mystification, that Monsieur Marchand, on this very day, very early in the morning, left Dresden by stage coach.[13]

Of course whilst such anecdotal evidence is of interest, it does not even begin to focus on any specific topic regarding the organ fugues. For the remainder of the 18th Century, there is next to nothing in terms of any further biographical detail on Bach except a couple of very minor exceptions. One of these appeared in what can sensibly be regarded as a handbook and dictionary by the musician Ernst Ludwig Gerber (1746 -1819). This publication was entitled *Historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler*. This dictionary was published in 1790 and 1792 as there were two volumes respectively. However, the information is merely copied from the *Nekrolog* and thus provides no further information. It is also worth pointing out that by 1800, there was only one child of Bach's who was still alive – Regina Susana (1742-1809). As such, the quality of the biographical evidence hereafter is thus questionable owing to the lack of direct contact with Bach or even Bach's sons. Needless to say, the infant Regina Susana could hardly have provided much in the way of insight.

Ludwig Van Beethoven (1770-1827) was briefly acquainted with Regina Susana Bach and was all too aware that there was still no substantial detail concerning Bach's output. As such, he made contact with Regina Susana, who, despite her father's renown, was in poverty. Beethoven arranged in conjunction with publisher Breitkopf und Härtel for funds to be raised and the following extract is from the publication *All. / Musik Zeitung* May 1800.

> This family (Bach) has now dwindled down to the single daughter of the great Sebastian Bach, and this daughter is now very old, this daughter is starving.[14]

Beethoven was of course acting out of charity and good-will. He was, however, not considering writing a biography on Bach. Furthermore, he had no deliberate intention of publicising Bach's reputation as a formidable composer and musician.

It is not until the early 19th Century that the first substantial biography appears. Johan Nickolaus Forkel's biography *Über Johan Sebastian Bachs Leben, Kunst und Kunstwerke* was published in 1802. Whilst a considerable portion deals with Bach's family, the aspect of W.F. Bach and C.P.E. Bach as composers, Bach's tenure at Leipzig, the nature of Bach, the quality of his instrumental playing and various anecdotal evidence such as Bach visiting C.P.E. Bach and meeting Frederick the Great

[13] Bach, Peter, *The Necrology on J.S. Bach – 1750* (Online Translation)
[14] Forbes, Elliot**,** *Thayer's Life of Beethoven* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1992) p.276

(1712-1786), Forkel only briefly begins to delve into the question of composition and specifically, the genre of fugue.

> Bach's fugue is of quite another kind. It presents all the characteristics that we are accustomed to in freer musical forms: a flowing and distinctive melody, ease, clarity, facility in the progression of parts, inexhaustible variety of modulation, purest harmony, the exclusion of every jarring or unnecessary note, unity of form and variety of style, rhythm, and measure, and such superabundant animation that the hearer may well ask himself whether every note is not actually alive. Such are the properties of Bach's Fugues, properties which excite the admiration and astonishment of all who can appreciate the intellectual calibre their composition demands.[15]

Charles Sanford Terry made an English translation and references are made to specific works but there is exceedingly little in the way of musical analysis. The only exception to this is Forkel's illustration of Bach using the motif 'BACH' as the third subject to be introduced in *Contrapunctus XIV* in the Art of fugue. Aside from this, the biography does not assist by providing an insight as to how Bach composed and the compositional procedures found within his works let alone the organ fugues. It is also worth noting that despite the formidable reputation of Beethoven and indeed Mozart as composers who were acquainted with the compositions of Bach, neither attempted to delve further into specific detail and publicise details concerning Bach's compositions and their mechanisms. There seems no doubt that the merits of Bach's music, at this stage in the late 18th Century and early 19th Century, were only familiar to the *cognoscenti.*

The year 1850 of course marked the centenary of Bach's death and two short biographies were published by Johan Carl Schauer and Carl. L. Hilgenfeldt. However, both are fairly limited in their output and do little to provide further understanding. By contrast, Carl Hermann Bitter (1813- 85) published a substantial two – volume biography entitled *Johan Sebastian Bach* in 1865 and then a re-worked four volume version in 1879. Although not a musician by profession, he nonetheless was a Prussian politician of repute who wrote about music. The book is quite generalist at least initially in terms of providing details about Bach's career and his various posts held. However, specific reference is made to both details on the Church Cantatas and the Motets. The illustration overleaf clearly denotes the structure of the work and one can see that the Church Cantatas (*Die Kirchen – Cantaten*) and Motets (*Die Motetten*) receive considerable attention.

[15] Terry, Charles Sanford, *Johan Sebastian Bach – His life, art and work* (London: Constable and Company, 1920) p. 86

Illustration No. 6 a – The contents page of Bitter's *Johan Sebastian Bach* [16]

Inhalt

des ersten Bandes.

One can see from the contents page that a substantial portion is dedicated to both the Church Cantatas and the Motets. Bitter provides perhaps the most useful understanding of aspects in the Cantatas such as the treatment of chorales, instrumentation, the recitative and arias that any biographer until now has provided. There are some passages which also bear witness to musical analytical scrutiny such as this passage from the aria *Ebarme dich* from BWV 55:

[16] Bitter, Carl. Hermann, *Johan Sebastian Bach* (Berlin: Ferdinand Schneider, 1885)

Illustration No. 6 b – An extract from Chapter VI (A) – *Die Kirchen – Cantaten* [17]

Die Arie iſt verhältnißmäßig kurz, die dreitheilige Form nicht hervortretend. Eine mäkelnde Kritik könnte hinſichtlich der Declamation des letzten Eintritts der Worte: „Laß um Jeſu Chriſti willen"

Despite the archaic nature of the language for the above extract, Bitter nonetheless alludes to the notion of a Trinitarian depiction through the tri-partite sequential formula. Bitter also provides a comprehensive list of both cantatas and motets that were to known to exist at the time though it is estimated that a substantial portion has been lost. 'Bach's cantatas have come down to us in substantially reduced numbers. The obituary by C.P.E. Bach and J.F. Agricola mentions five cycles of cantatas for the whole church year, but today only three cycles survive virtually complete.'[18] Bitter's analysis of the motets by contrast is much shorter and provides little more than a brief commentary on each one. However, the commentary on the cantatas has much to be praised as it began to forge a new direction in providing an understanding of Bach's music.

The biography by Phillip Spitta (1841-94) to this day still serves as a beacon of historical and analytical importance. The biography contained two volumes published in 1873 and 1880 respectively. It is a detailed study of Bach's life and takes in turn not only the various and differing posts throughout Bach's musical career, but also, the biography deals with specific aspects concerning each post. A passage which is of direct interest concerning the methodology of analysis regarding a specific organ work is derived from Vol. 2. It makes specific reference to the Fantasia in G Minor BWV 542 (i).

> And yet, the mature genius of Bach presides over it and informs it all. The close answers exactly to the ornate commencement; the polyphonic movements in bb. 9 – 13 are precisely the same as bb. 25 – 30; the organ recitative – bb. 14 – 24 – are balanced by the free harmonies of bb.31 – 40. Even in the modulations, which almost beat Buxtehude in audacity, a plan is clearly traceable. They rise from A – bar 14 – by degrees through B Minor, C Minor, up to D then to E – Flat minor, of which the bass seizes the dominant and thence proceeds upwards by six chromatic steps.[19]

[17] Bitter, Carl. Hermann, *Johan Sebastian Bach* (Berlin: Ferdinand Schneider, 1885) p.244
[18] Dürr, Alfred, and Jones, Richard, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach: With Their Librettos in German-English Parallel Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) p.11
[19] Spitta, Philip, *Johann Sebastian Bach: His Work and Influence on the Music of Germany, 1685-1750, Volume 2* (English Translation) (Massachusetts: Courier Corporation, 1992) p.24

Illustration No. 7 a – BWV 542 (i) – bb.9 – 16.

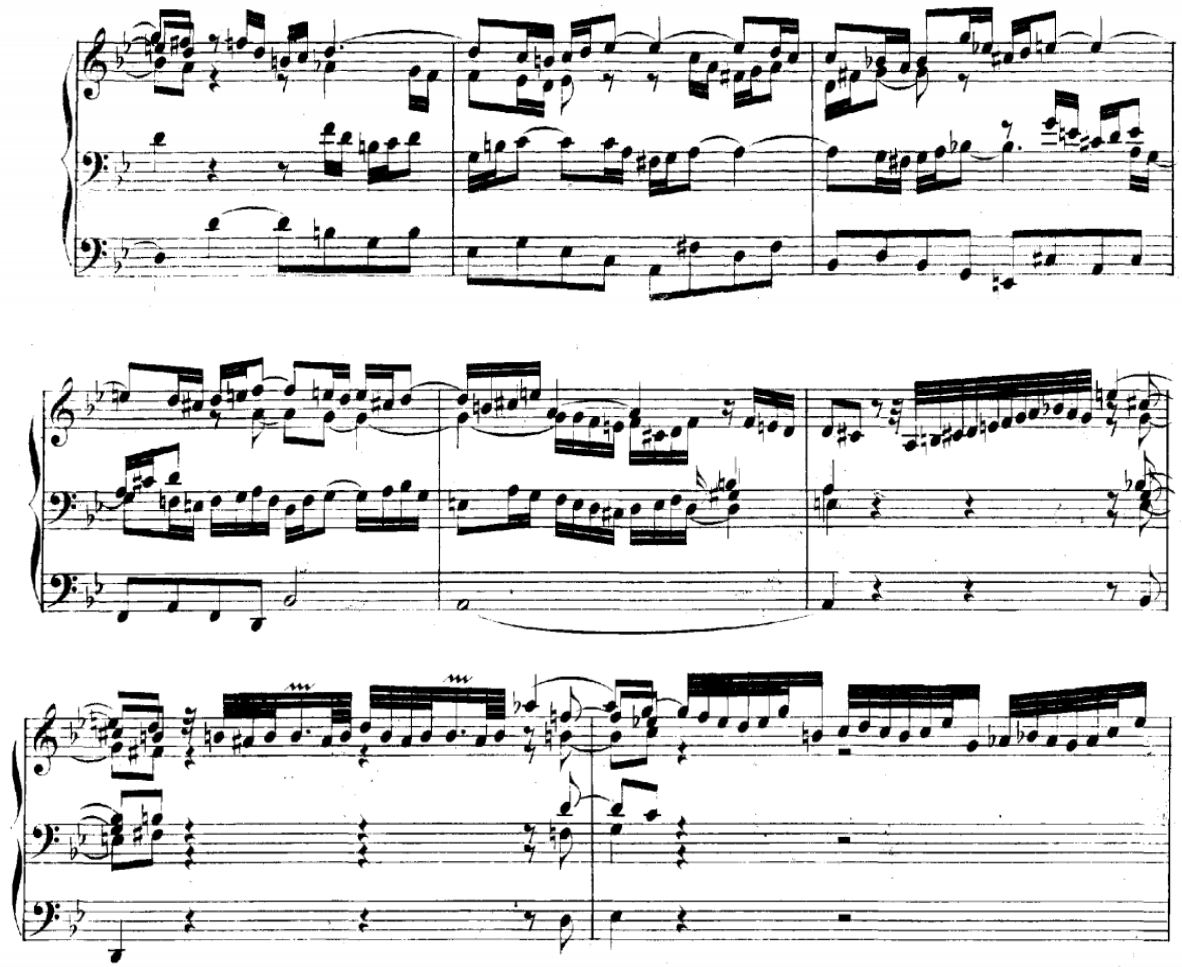
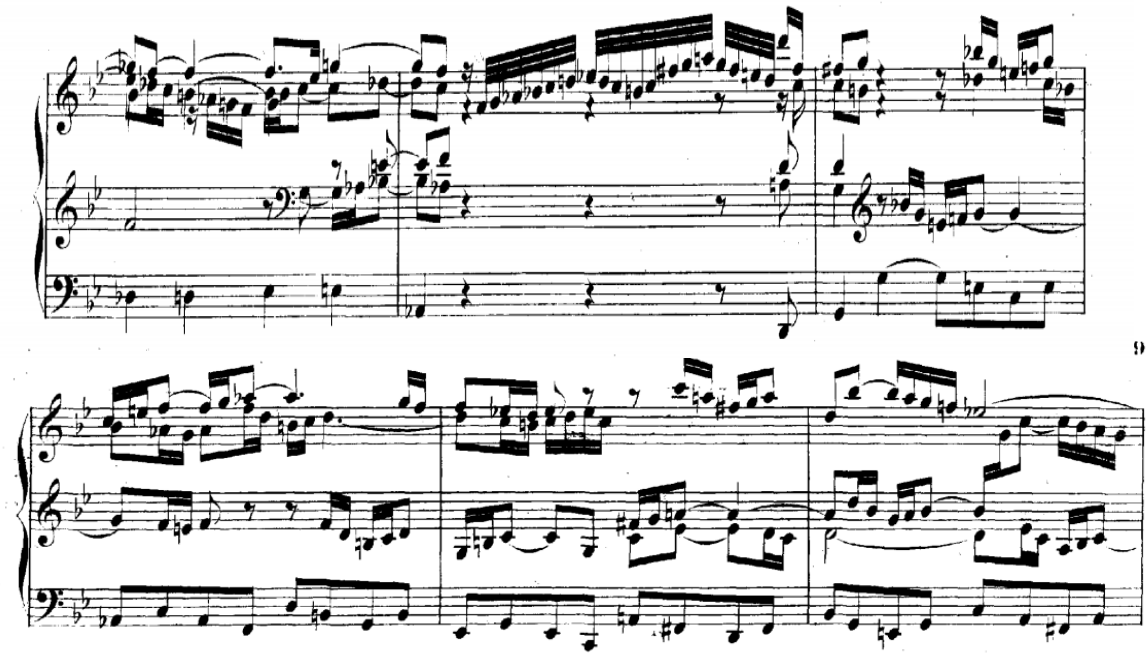
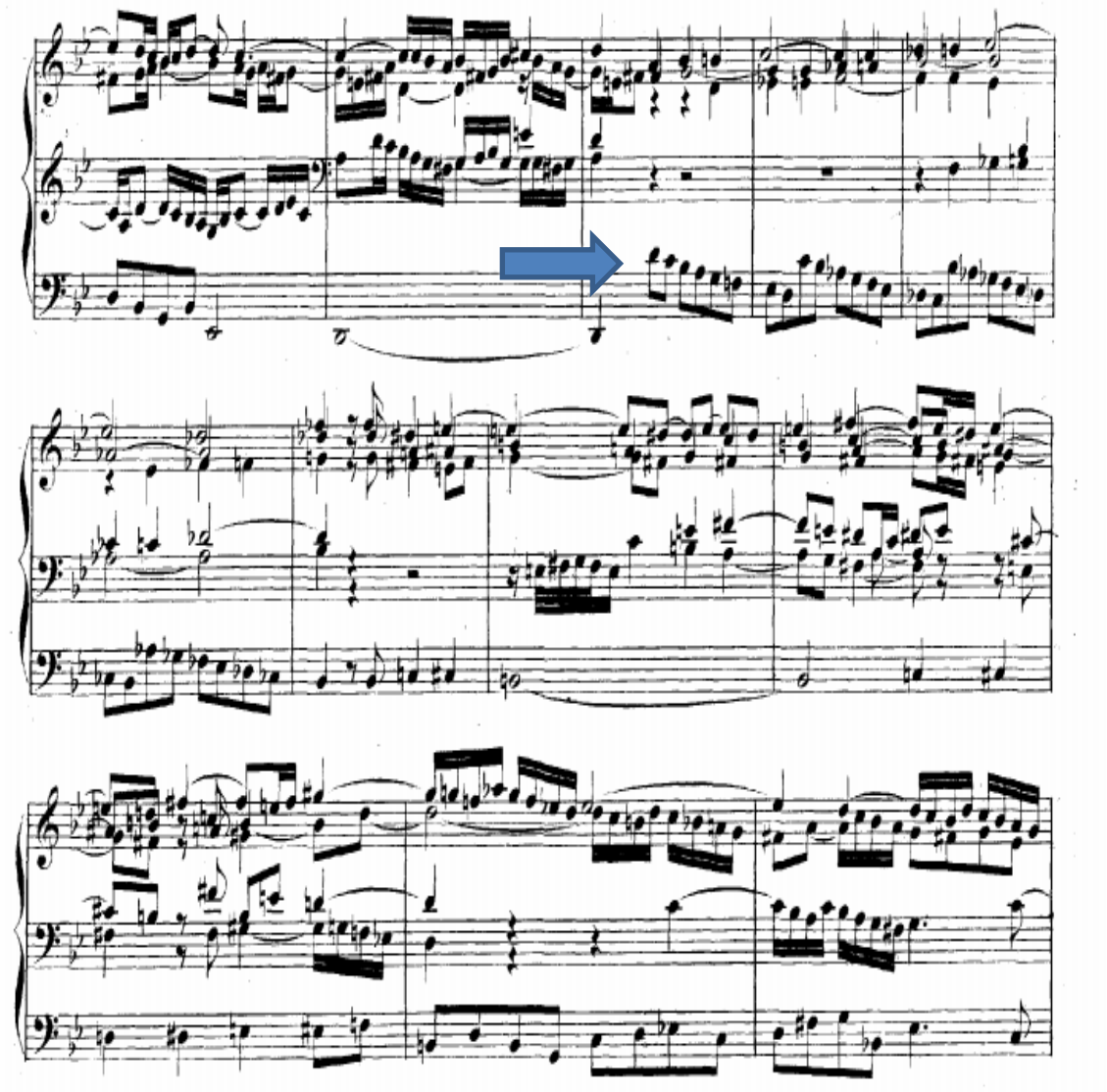


Illustration No. 7 b – BWV 542 (i) – bb. 23 – 28.



The preceding two passages from BWV 542 (i) in which Spitta describes the polyphonic movement as being precisely the same, is not completely true as clearly, the question of alternation between *dux* and *comes* (b.9 /25) is immediately obvious. In addition, the vagueness of the statement and capricious analytical content is exactly what the problem is regarding a lot of the analyses concerning Bach's organ works. There is absolutely no mention of the antiphonic distribution, the question of precise harmonic progression or heightened levels of dissonance: all of which are of the utmost importance regarding the construction. Furthermore, one of the most harmonically imaginative and diverse passages of the whole Fantasia and indeed within the organ literature is completely unacknowledged. The so called 'free – harmonies of bb.31 – 40' are anything but free in their design yet their kaleidoscopic enchantment suggests on the face of it that they are. Without doubt, the internal structure is paramount to such effect.

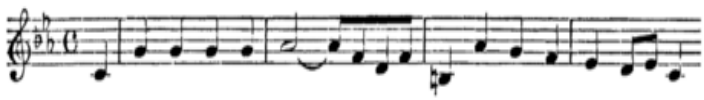
Illustration No. 7 c - BWV 542 (i) – bb.29 – 40



There is no doubt that such music cannot be merely listened to – the level of inner complexity and sophistication is clearly not explained by Spitta and thus far, there has been a lacuna of comprehension. The ability of Bach to deceive the ear in b.38 leading into b.39 regarding the ambiguity of the harmonic direction that will ensue between the soprano and the pedal line is testimony to the level of intricacy. The question as to how one hears the G Sharp in the soprano and the E Sharp in the pedal is of course dependent on how experienced the listener and interpreter is regarding anticipating harmonic progressions. Ultimately, Bach decides to plunge back towards the subdominant minor – C Minor which is of course somewhat unexpected. One further aspect which is worth mentioning and also makes direct reference regarding the clarification of fugal nomenclature is the following passage taken from Volume 1:

Illustration No.7 d – An extract from *Johann Sebastian Bach: His Work and Influence on the Music of Germany*, 1685-1750, Volume 1, p.592.

The fugue in F major is that which displays the grandest development to a regular double-fugue treatment throughout; but the first, in C minor, has the greatest vigour and fling. Its theme alone—

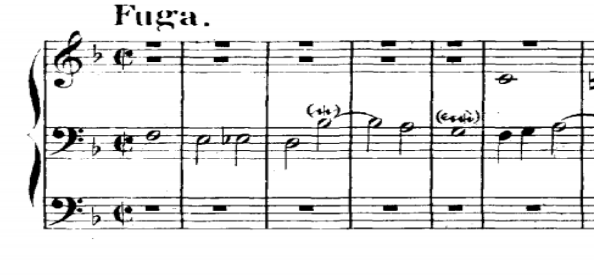


reveals that robust and conquering force which was Bach's alone, and which he most loved to display in his instrumental fugues.

The fugue in F Major refers to BWV 540 (ii) but the statement 'regular double fugue treatment throughout'[20] is painfully misleading and of course does nothing to elucidate the structure. There is nothing 'regular' about the structure as there is not one organ fugue by Bach which is the same so what is it that Spitta is comparing it with which makes it 'regular'? In actual fact, the fugue can be seen as tri – partite and in the third section, Bach allies a second countersubject thus forming a triple – invertible texture.

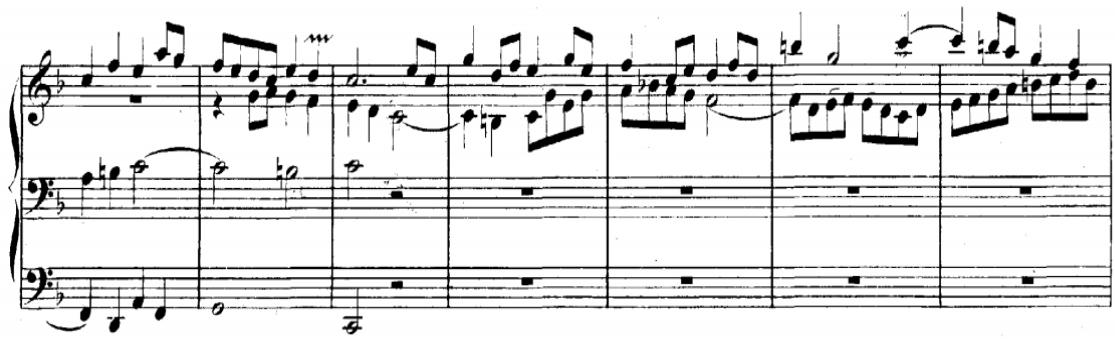
[20] Spitta, Philip**,** *Johann Sebastian Bach: His Work and Influence on the Music of Germany, 1685-1750,Volume 2* (English Translation) (Massachusetts: Courier Corporation, 1992) p.592

Illustration No. 8 a – BWV 540 (ii) bb.1 – 6



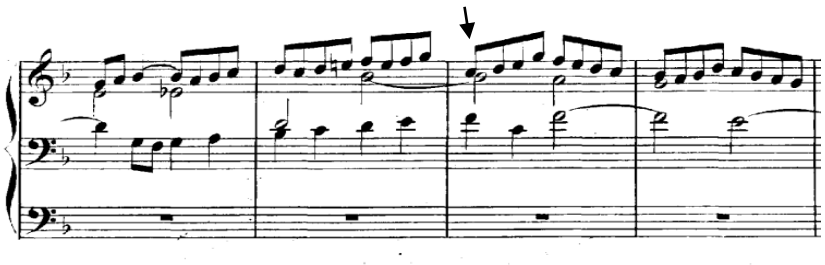
Thereafter, a second exposition for manuals only occurs with an entirely new and decisive subject (soprano voice – b.70):

Illustration No. 8 b - BWV 540 (ii) the second exposition with a new subject – bb.68 - 74 – the derivation of the 2nd subject.



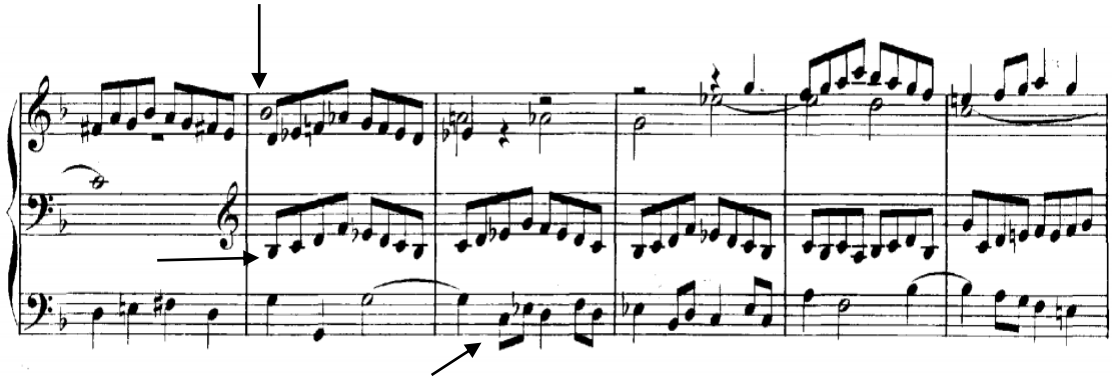
The third subject (taken from b.131) is introduced in the soprano voice.

Illustration No.8 c – BWV 540 (ii) bb.129 - 132 – the derivation of the 3rd subject (Soprano)



All three subjects are then united:

Illustration No.8 d – BWV 540 (ii) bb.152 – 157



The explanation concerning the C Minor fugue, BWV 537 (ii) in this context is of course limited and again, the importance of the previous section 'Clarification on fugal nomenclature' explains more concisely the inner structural mechanisms. There is no doubting the significance of Spitta's monumental biography as it is very extensive and covers many angles of Bach's career and music. 'For succeeding generations of music scholars, Spitta set the standard, focusing on Bach's compositions from four principal points of view: philological, historical, aesthetic and theological – intellectual.' [21]However, there is no denying the fact that for the specific purpose of this thesis, it does not deliver the level of analytical detail to provide an enlightened understanding of any of the fourteen selected organ fugues.

Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) published his biography of Bach in 1905 entitled *J.S. Bach: Le Musicien – Poète.* Schweitzer was a man of the cloth and was ordained as a curate in 1900. As such, his stance is very much focused as to how Bach conveyed religious meanings and expression through his music and particular, reference is made primarily to the sacred works. Of course in the case of the organ literature, the *Orgelbüchlein* provides a considerable back – drop for Schweitzer in his attempts to explain as to how Bach could convey the meaning of texts through music.

> The concept of the reciprocal relationships among the arts which Schweitzer has already explored in his 1899 dissertation on Kant, provides him with two diametrically opposed approaches to musical aesthetics: Wagner's language of music and words is intended to allow the emotional content of the text to speak through sound while Bach attempts to capture the visual, plastic, characteristic qualities in the text and to express these qualities in music to whatever extent possible so as to portray the text.[22]

The original 1905 edition contains five distinct sections. The first deals with the importance of the Chorale (La Musique Sacrée en Allemagne jusqu'a Bach), the second discusses the characteristics of Bach the person (La vie et le caractère de Bach), the third makes reference to specific groupings of work such as the motets (the organ works are discussed but are given no more than nine pages for the entire collection) and cantatas (La Genèse des oeuvres de Bach). The fourth passage bears arguably the greatest relevance to the very title of the work as it defines various motivic ideas and the symbolic references contained within the Chorales and Cantatas. It ultimately tries to define as to how music can convey the meaning of texts (Le Langage Musical de Bach). The fifth and indeed final section deals specifically with the technique of playing Bach's works (Sur la façon d'exécuter les oeuvres de Bach). There is no denying the fact that Schweitzer's biography is of particular relevance to providing a direct reference to the methodology of Bach to convey religious ideas and harnessing

[21]Geck, Martin, (trans.) John Hargraves, *Johan Sebastian Bach Life and Work* (London, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006) p.13
[22] Geck, Martin, (trans.) John Hargraves, *Johan Sebastian Bach Life and Work* (London, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006) p.20

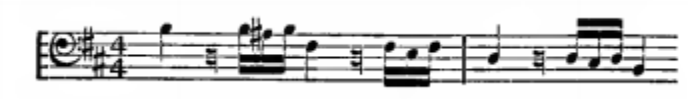
music as a language of communication. Despite there being a small reference to the Art of Fugue in the second section, fugal analysis on the whole receives little attention.

> Schweitzer regarded Bach as a devout Christian whose job as a church musician was to use every means at his disposal in order to convince the members of the congregations in the churches for which he wrote his cantatas of the truth and ethical importance of the texts he set. Because the messages to be imparted were complex in their implications, Bach resorted to multiple languages, or superimposed yet distinct sets of symbols, to convey meaning.[23]

It was not until 1909 that the first substantial publication about Bach was written by an Englishman – C.H.H. Parry (1848-1918). In the preface, substantial accolade is given to Spitta for his work as a pioneering biographer in that so much material was not only uncovered but also contextualised. However, Parry's biography has substantial pitfalls as it is again a very general approach without a specific angle. Of course, there is no doubt that the text is resourceful and knowledgeable from an overall historical perspective but from a decisive analytical perspective, Parry offers very little understanding. It is again a broad – sweep approach and the following passage concerning the B Minor Fugue BWV 544 (ii) proves exactly why such an approach is of little worth to providing an analytical understanding:

> The fugue with its solemn, rolling subject clearly has some deep meaning. It seems to suggest a deep temperamental meditation on the remorselessness of destiny, and the helplessness of man in the face of it. The strange little ejaculations which are introduced as characteristic traits in the latter part of the fugue seem to represent gestures of acquiescence, especially when they come in with the pedals near the end:

Illustration No.9 – An extract referring to BWV 544 (ii) from Hubert Parry's *JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH The Story of the Development of a Great Personality.* Knickerbocker Press, London and New York. 1909. p.512.



> As an illustration of the continuity of Bach's mental activities it may be pointed out that there is a dim kinship between the subject of the fugue and the subject of the fugue conjoined with the well-known early Toccata in D minor. The whole work is developed on grand lines and in the serious spirit characteristic of his latest period, and confirms to the last the presence of a great human soul expressing itself in the full mastery of artistic resources.[24]

Despite Parry's formidable reputation as a musician and composer, the *analytical quality* and contribution in this publication on Bach has much to be desired. Of course, Parry's intention was

[23] Graubart, Michael, 'Decoding Bach - Emotion or Meaning', *The Musical Times Vol. 141 No.1872* (2000) p.10
[24] Parry, Charles. Hubert, *JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH - The Story of the Development of a Great Personality* (London and New York, Knickerbocker Press, 1909) p.512

probably aimed at providing a general reference book. However, is the music of Bach best understood through vague and slightly sporadic assertions?

The *Bach Reader* first appeared in a publication by Arthur Mendel and Hans. T. David in 1945. It has undergone several revisions with the most up to date and revised being edited by Christoph Wolff (1999) – *The New Bach Reader: A life of Johan Sebastian Bach in letters and documents.* This publication is one of the most revealing about Bach and his career as a musician. It accounts for a wide range of topics including Bach's income and finances throughout his career, letters by Bach, organ inspections, menus for specific dinners, title pages of specific works, testimonials and references on behalf of students to name just a few. The list is extensive and provides a remarkable collection of anecdotal and 'matter of fact' evidence. In addition, the perhaps more revealing characteristics about Bach are those which are included in Part IV 'Bach as viewed by his contemporaries'. Aspects include detail on Bach as a teacher, Bach as a keyboard player, Bach's pedal playing to name just a couple. Part V is dedicated to Bach's influence posthumously, 'Bach in the second half of the 18th Century'. Brief accounts include 'On Bach's eminence in the development of organ playing' (Johann Joachim Quantz – 1752), 'On Bach's tuning' (William Marpurg – 1776), 'On Bach composing without the use of a keyboard' (Ernst Ludwig Gerber – 1790). Thereafter, the remainder of the book contains extracts from correspondence with Bach's sons and their contemporaries. However, despite the superfluous and revealing information, yet again, the question of detailed analytical study is redundant.

Malcolm Boyd's biography, *Master Musicians* – Bach (1983) from an analytical perspective is of a higher calibre. It does away with biographical information and predominantly focuses on specific groupings of works (Concerti, Orchestral suites, Passions etc.) in which he then makes passing references to individual works and movements. The organ literature does receive scrutiny but the treatment of it is not consistent. Whereas considerable detail and emphasis is placed on the analysis and interpretative detail of the chorale *Durch Adams Fall ist ganz verderbt (BWV 637)* from the *Orgelbüchlein* , there are at times some glaring statements which are not satisfactory in their comprehension, 'The B Minor (BWV 544) is another of those works, like the 'Great' G Minor (BWV 542) , whose prelude overshadows its fugue in intensity of expression and sheer command of the medium'. [25] Whilst of course expressing an opinion is not at all without fault, there is absolutely

[25] Boyd, Malcolm, *Master Musicians – Bach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) p.61

no reasoning as to why this statement is true and as such, how exactly these fugues fall short of his expectations. Of course, the perspective for the purpose of this thesis concerning solely fugues is refined; however, this biography does at least make occasional detailed references to the organ works.

The Cambridge Companion to Bach (1997) offers a much needed and welcoming approach which is quite different to any of the aforementioned publications. John Butt quite rightly points out that the nature of biographical writing has changed and as such, this publication sets out to portray this difference.

> One of the primary aims of this Companion is to show both the achievements of Bach research and the possibilities of further directions. It is designed to provide much of the background information for Bach's career and social context together with proposals for the analysis and understanding of the music. The foremost purpose might be to offer a companion to thinking about Bach.[26]

This approach is exactly what is required to provide a more enlightened understanding and John Butt has successfully compiled a collection of essays on specific topics by some of the current foremost scholars on Bach. Examples include '*The mature vocal works and their theological and liturgical context'* by Robin Leaver or '*Bachian invention and its mechanisms'* by Laurence Dreyfus. Yet, despite this excellent information, the organ works and the question of fugal composition receive relatively little attention.

Christoph Wolff has long been at the forefront of Bach scholarship and rightly so as his work has been of considerable value. His well - regarded publication *Bach - The Learned Musician* (2001) has much to be commended though its integrity of scholarship and the clear angles which Wolff intends to focus upon. However, its intention is again not to be overly analytical but rather a well accounted biography which has specific angles. The earlier compilation by Wolff, *Bach Essays on his life and Music (1991),* however, offers more in the way of insight into specific works and in particular, the direct focus on *Clavier Übung III* as a collection of organ works provides a succinct insight into the internal structure throughout the twenty – seven movements. Several organ works are mentioned but on the whole, they are mentioned merely as passing reference. The exception to this is Chapter 23 – 'The Architecture of the Passacaglia'. It is a well - articulated account and of course the fugue is discussed with Wolff pointing out the triple – invertibility and the subsequent permutations. The quality of the scholarship is without question and it is regrettable that the same has not been provided for the other organ works.

[26] Butt, John, *The Cambridge Companion to Bach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p.3

The translated biography by Klaus Eidam *The True Life of Johan Sebastian Bach* (2001) has had a mixed reception. The approach is certainly innovative as its main purpose is to partially dissuade the reader from the 19th / early 20th Century opinions of Spitta, Sanford Terry and Schweitzer. 'All three of the above – named consider Bach's lifework from the protestant theological standpoint of the nineteenth century, viewing Bach himself as a composing man of God who found fulfilment in serving his Church.'[27] However, whilst the purpose of the biography certainly attracts attention through its criticism, its ultimate priority is of course not with the topic of fugue.

With the publication of Peter Williams' *The Organ Music of J.S. Bach* (1980) and the revised edition (2003), one would hope that there would be plentiful information on each work. Despite the aim of providing effectively an encyclopaedic reference book, it all too often lacks sufficient detail. In addition, there are tendencies to lapse into slightly casual language and often casting doubt on his assertions. The following extract overleaf BWV 536 (ii), albeit incomplete, is typical of the format which Williams follows:

[27] Eidam, Klaus, *The True Life of Johan Sebastian Bach* (New York, Basic Books, 2001) p. XVII

Illustration No. 10 – An extract from Peter Williams' *The organ music of J.S. Bach*, Cambridge University Press, 2003. p.58.

Fugue

1–41	first dominant answer tonal, second real; countersubject
41–65	'false stretto'; tonal answer 49 answered *en taille*; 'rocking' figure
65–85	'false stretto'; tonal answer, answered in the bass
85–110	F♯ minor, B minor, first with 'rocking' figure
110–36	entry and answer in D; episodes
136–53	closer 2-part stretti; tonic in b. 145
153–82	final entry (pedal); coda on scale pattern

The entry in (e.g.) b. 69 is disguised, and only gradually is it clear that this is not merely an episode stretto. An overall shape is

A	1–45
B	45–153
C	153–82

in which *B* is characterized by pseudo-stretto, the last of which (from b. 136) is at one bar not two bars. The original countersubject is hinted at before it returns above the final entry, and the 'rocking' countersubject is useful in the quasi-episode from b. 115.

Firstly, the absence of diagrams proves to be a substantial loss. Purely having a list of bar numbers is relatively unappealing. Secondly, there is lack of detail concerning terminology and there is often a lax sentiment – there is little in the way of formality. Thirdly, one often wonders whether Williams is sure of his own analysis; what does 'the rocking counter-subject is useful in the quasi – episode from b.115'[28] mean? In theory, this book presents an ideal document but the reality is that it is a handbook offering brief guidance on each work.

This point concerning Williams' writing style and overall success is echoed by a more recent publication, *J.S. Bach at his Royal Instrument* (2013) by Russell Stinson. Furthermore, Stinson devotes much of his first chapter (Studies and Discoveries) to discussing the merits and less meritorious features of Williams' publications (both the 1980 and 2003 editions). Of course, what can one deduce about Stinson's own publication? Undoubtedly, the angle which he takes is innovative as it predominantly concerns the word 'reception'. There are studies of how Felix Mendelssohn (1809-47), Edward Elgar (1857-1934) and César Franck (1822-90) interpreted the organ works of Bach and their own contributions, be it through transcriptions or their pedagogy. Stinson then discusses 'aspects of reception' for a selection of organ works. The main issue here is that yet again, the focus does not address the question of providing an enlightened understanding of fugal composition. This is a noteworthy publication as it does offer an innovative approach.

[28]Williams, Peter, *The Organ Works of J.S. Bach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) p.58

A new milestone was reached with the publication of 'Music in the Castle of Heaven' (2013) by John Eliot Gardiner. It makes no attempt to merely etch out further biographical material and just to create a 'handbook', rather, whilst there is a distinctive slant on the cantatas and the choral music (not surprisingly given Gardiner's background), Gardiner probes various aspects which until now have been cast aside. One such aspect is Chapter Four 'The Class of '85' (1685). A distinctive comparison between Handel, Scarlatti and Bach provides considerable insight into their careers and the unique paths they embraced. Chapter Seven again has a very specific focus 'Bach at his workbench'. Such aspects do offer a refreshing insight. However, Gardiner would no doubt agree that the publication is not designed to be analytical. There are occasional analytical references including how Bach portrays the sign of the cross. Nonetheless, despite the paucity on this front, the publication has much to be commended for. Of course, fugue is barely mentioned.

Whilst the list of biographies mentioned is by no means exhaustive, it nonetheless provides sufficient evidence as to why analysis on the organ works and specifically the question of fugal composition is long overdue. The analysis which follows will examine fourteen strategically selected fugues written at differing times in Bach's career, and all representing a different compositional approach.

Table No.3 – The fourteen selected fugues that will be analysed.

Fugue in C Major	BWV 531 (ii)	c.1700 – 05
Fugue in B Minor 'Corelli'	BWV 579	c.1707 – 10
Fugue in D Minor	BWV 565 (ii)	c.1710 – 15
Fugue in A Major	BWV 536 (ii)	c.1714 – 17
Fugue in G Minor	BWV 542 (ii)	c.1717 – 20
Fugue in G Major	BWV 541 (ii)	c.1720 – 23
Fugue in D Minor	BWV 538 (ii)	c.1720 – 23
Fugue in C Minor	BWV 582 (ii)	c. 1723 – 27
Kyrie Gott, Heiliger Geist	BWV 674	c.1735 – 39
Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam	BWV 685	c.1735 – 39
Duetto No. 4	BWV 804	c.1735 – 39
Fugue in Eb Major	BWV 552 (ii)	c.1735 – 39
Fugue in B Minor	BWV 544 (ii)	c.1735 – 42
Fugue in C Major	BWV 547 (ii)	c.1742 – 45

> For several reasons, the book still resists dating this music. First, there is a reasonably clear, broad chronology to most of it; secondly, greater precision is won only by speculating from inconclusive sources and putative resemblances to other music (hence the frequent disagreements amongst writers); and thirdly, with living and changing works of this kind there may be a misleading, old-fashioned positivism in the whole notion of trying to pinpoint a particular moment in their life.[29]

The previous table thus aims to provide an approximation albeit as accurate as possible. As Williams suggests, one of the greatest clues is to look at resemblances to other musical examples which Bach composed. Concerning the manuscripts, with the exception of the publication of *Clavier Übung III* in 1739, all the organ works are copies. Many of these copies were of course made by Bach's own students and indeed, one will never be entirely certain of precise dates. However, the following is a brief summary as to why the fourteen fugues have been placed in this order:

BWV 531 (ii) is undoubtedly an early work given its lack of formal structure and improvisatory tendencies. The tonal compass is very narrow. The pedal is also used infrequently and is thus not treated equally within the texture. Furthermore, through the flamboyance and exuberance, the work bears resemblance to the *stylus phantasticus* and one can undeniably detect the influence of Böhm. BWV 579 is radically different exhibiting a more formal structure with a regular countersubject and invertible counterpoint. Despite this, the tonal compass is still very confined. It is well known that when Bach begun as organist at Weimar in 1708, he was introduced to the leading Italian composers of the time and this example from Corelli would fit within this time frame.

BWV 565 (ii) demonstrates greater tonal diversity and indeed the length is considerably longer. One can also begin to witness Bach's distilled compositional processes of taking an idea and then working out how to develop it sequentially and other possible permutations without detracting very far from the original melodic contour. However, the work is still lacking in contrapuntal density. The manuscript evidence, (see Chapter 3) is tantalising as to why this fugue dates from 1710-15. BWV 536 (ii) displays a greater level of harmonic density and a greater level of contrapuntal procedure through its suggestions of triple-invertible counterpoint. However, such effects are hinted at rather than fully embraced. Again, it shows an increasing level of sophistication though still not yet fully refined.

With BWV 542 (ii), triple-invertible counterpoint is a prominent feature and there are heightened levels of structural design which are indeed akin to those seen in the contemporaneous Book 1 of the 48 Preludes and Fugues (1722). Several of the fugues in Book 1 use triple-invertible counterpoint as a paradigm. Two examples include the C Sharp Minor Fugue BWV 849 (ii) which has two recurring

[29] Williams, Peter**,** *The Organ Works of J.S. Bach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) p.viii

countersubjects. The Ab Major Fugue BWV 862(ii) has triple-invertible episodic material. The use of modulation to related keys is also prevalent in BWV 541 (ii) and exhibits the tendencies of concerto form with alternating contrasts between the *concertino* and the *ripieno*. The Brandenburg Concerti (BWV 1046-1051) date from 1721 and there are indeed prevalent concerto features in both aforementioned fugues.

Both BWV 538 (ii) and BWV 582 (ii) illustrate the trait of having very little thematic material yet so much is crafted from such relative thematic austerity. The use of invertible canonic textures and regular triple-invertible counterpoint becomes prolific as a compositional process. The religious and numerological symbolisms in both examples exhibit similar thought processes to be found in the St John Passion, BWV 245 (1724) and St Matthew Passion, BWV 244 (1727).

Clavier Übung III contains works which all display a high level of intricacy which truly illustrates a refinement of thought processes though never at the expense of creativity. The art of contrapuntal subtlety is also apparent. They certainly show a marked difference in outlook and character to *Clavier Übung I* (1731) and *Clavier Übung II* (1735). BWV 544 (ii) on the one hand is forward looking with elements of the *galant* yet the masterful nature of introducing and then combining all the countersubjects as well as inter–episodic relationships shows a composer fixed on the idea of a very precise internal structure. BWV 547(ii) takes this a step further whereby formal structure is of the utmost importance on every level and indeed not dissimilar in thought processes to the Art of Fugue (BWV 1080).

The methodology by which the subsequent fugal subject entry tables are configured stem from Laurence Dreyfus' techniques from *Bach and the patterns of Invention* (Harvard University, 1996). Namely, S = Subject, C/S = Counter Subject. Thus, S + 5 = Subject up a 5^{th} (albeit non-discriminatory concerning the type of '5^{th}'). In addition, I have included other original aspects such as identifying the voice as well as highlighting permutations of the subject e.g. augmentation, inversion, *per arsin et thesin* or indeed just a fragment of the subject.

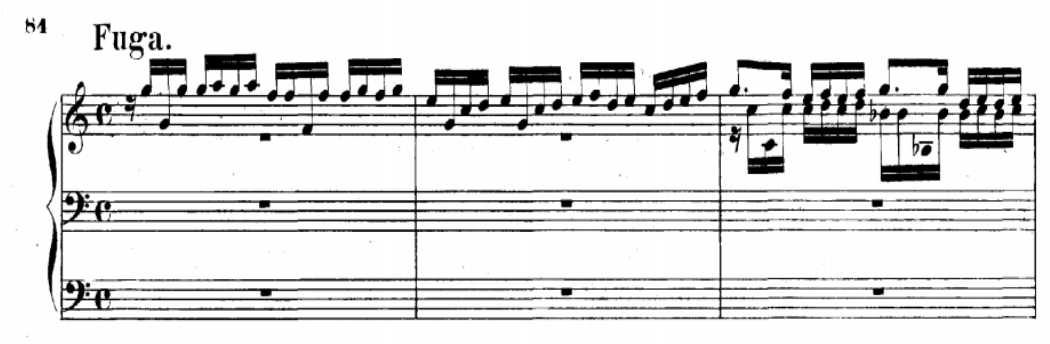
CHAPTER 1

Fugue in C Major - BWV 531 (ii) - The Youthful Bach

> Christoph Bernard brought Cicero's five divisions of rhetoric up to date and in applying them to music reduced them to three: *inventio*, *elaboratio* and *executio*. First, Bach crafts a workable idea (*inventio*), one that opens the door to creative embellishment (*elaboratio*), and then puts it to the test in performance (*executio).* These concepts are complementary and vital. The first two require intense mental activity, but there is a crucial difference between them: whereas invention is work, elaboration is play. [30]

Arguably the most striking impression upon both the organist and the listener with this fugue is the relentless energy throughout. It can certainly be regarded as an exponent of *perpetuum mobile* as in every bar (except one) there are semiquavers. This is certainly one of Bach's earliest organ fugues, the evidence for which follows.

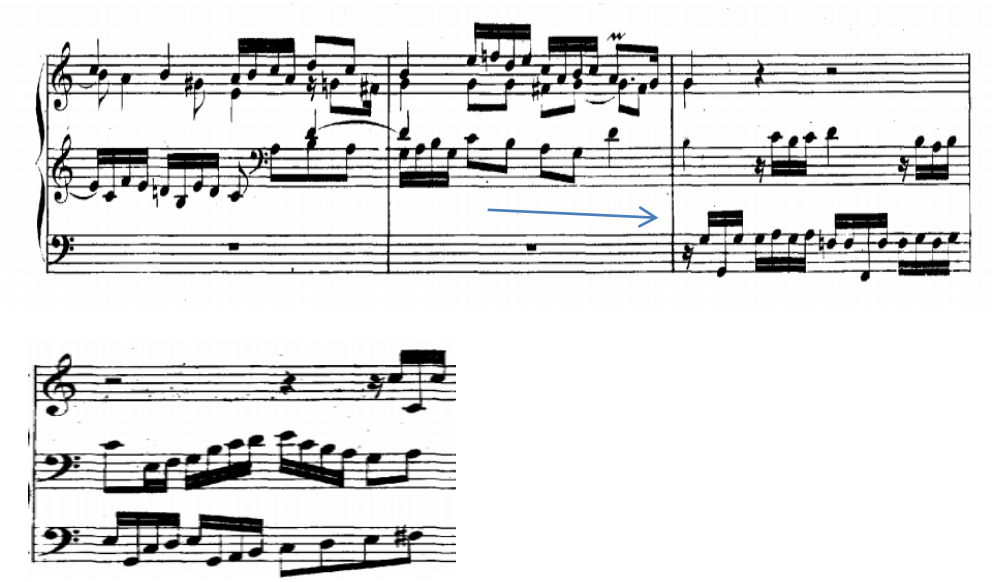
Illustration No.11 – BWV 531 (ii) – bb.1 – 3.



The nature of the subject is one that is not harmonically complex and is based primarily upon sequence and repetition. Perhaps the most striking feature of the subject is the initial syncopation and the vivacity of the semiquavers. The answer in the exposition takes the form of the subdominant rather than a tonal alteration. Even though there are four separate entries in the exposition, the fugue in its entirety is lightly textured and there are rarely more than three voices working together; in some cases only two. Moreover, the pedal cannot really be considered as an independent voice as it has one subject entry in b.36/37.

[30] Gardiner, John Eliot, *Music in the Castle of Heaven a portrait of Johann Sebastian Bach* (London, Allen Lane, 2013) p.214

Illustration No.12 – BWV 531(ii) – bb.34 – 37.



The primary function of the pedal line is to reinforce the bass, particularly for cadential points. That the pedal has an entry in b.36/37 is perhaps really no more than a textural experiment by the young Bach: the vast majority of this fugue is scored for manuals only. It is highly likely that this fugue was written c.1700, either at Ohrdruf or soon after Bach had left Ohrdruf, having had lessons from his brother Johan Christoph Bach (1671-1721). Johann Pachelbel taught Johan Christoph Bach, and much of the music in this fugue resembles the music of Pachelbel. This style belongs to that of the Southern German influence, which is rarely as harmonically teasing or complex as that of the North German influence, for example in the music of Buxtehude. A lot of the organ works by Buxtehude have far greater dissonance and polyphonic density. Overleaf is a fugue in C Major by Pachelbel: one can see the similarities with BWV 531(ii), not least due to the relative simplicity of the harmony (triadic, 3rds, 6ths) but also due to the lack of pedal. For comparison, an extract from Buxtehude's Fugue in C Major (BuxWV 137) portrays quite the opposite. The differences in style are considerable. It is therefore highly likely that BWV 531 (ii) was composed before Bach's acquaintance with Buxtehude, as it is essentially simple in style, lacking the more complex approach of Buxtehude.

Illustration No.13 – Fugue in C Major – bb.1 – 16. J.Pachelbel

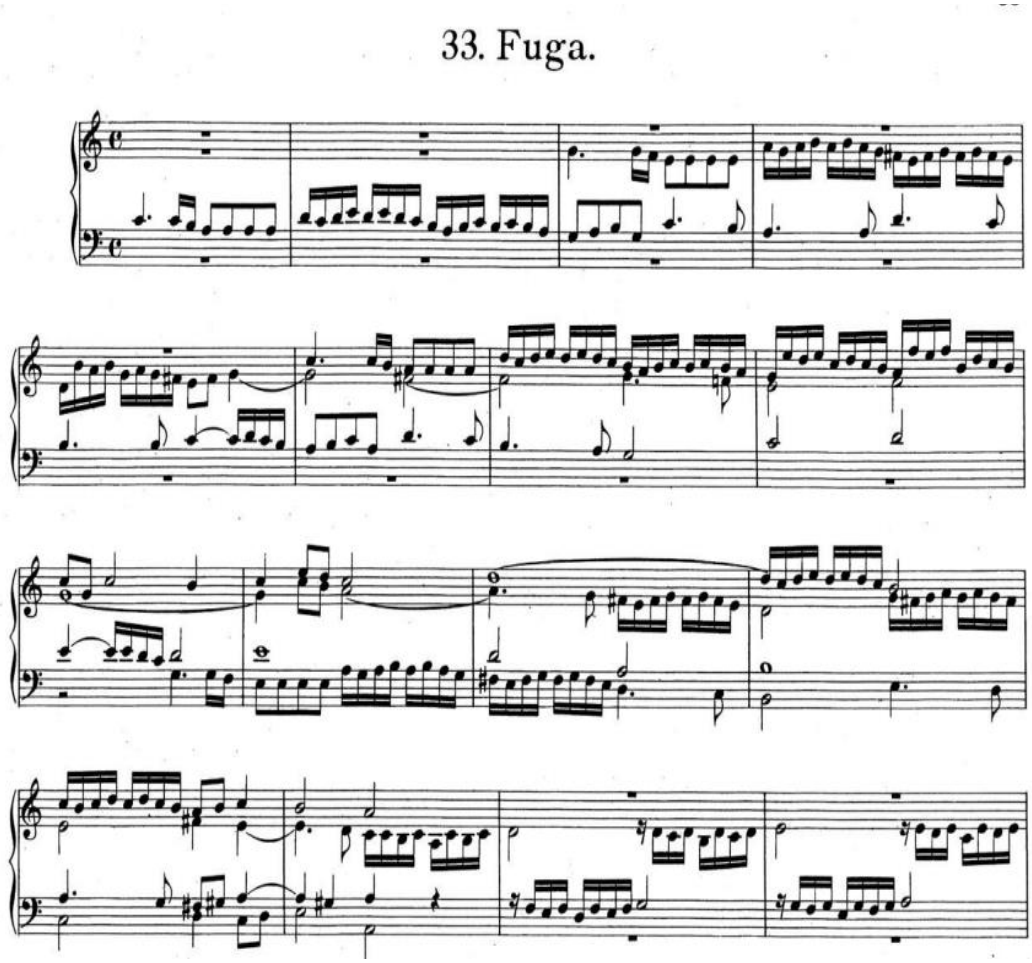
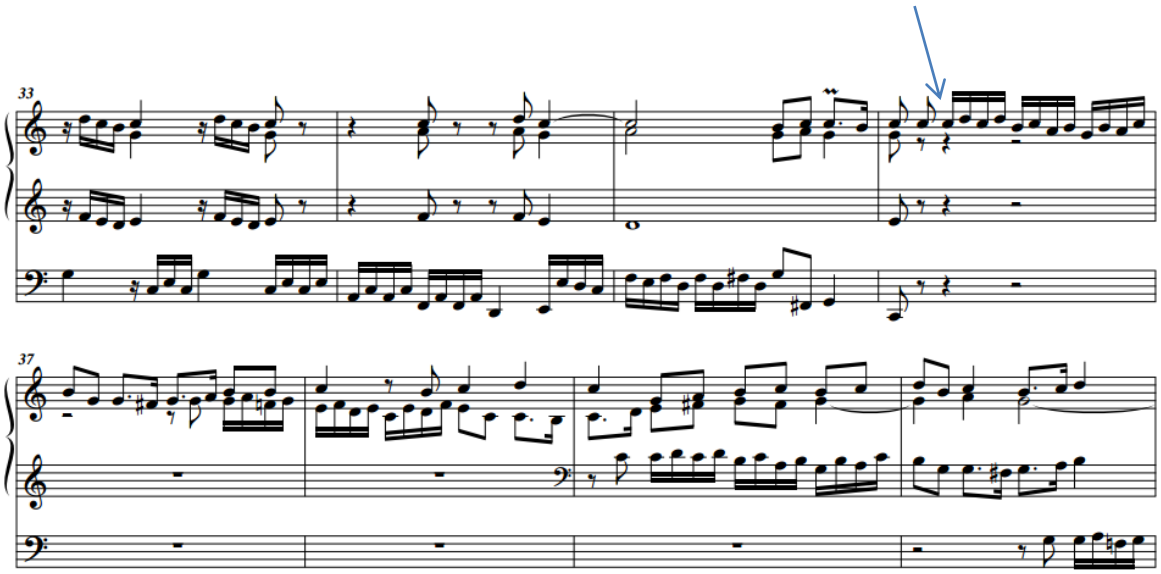
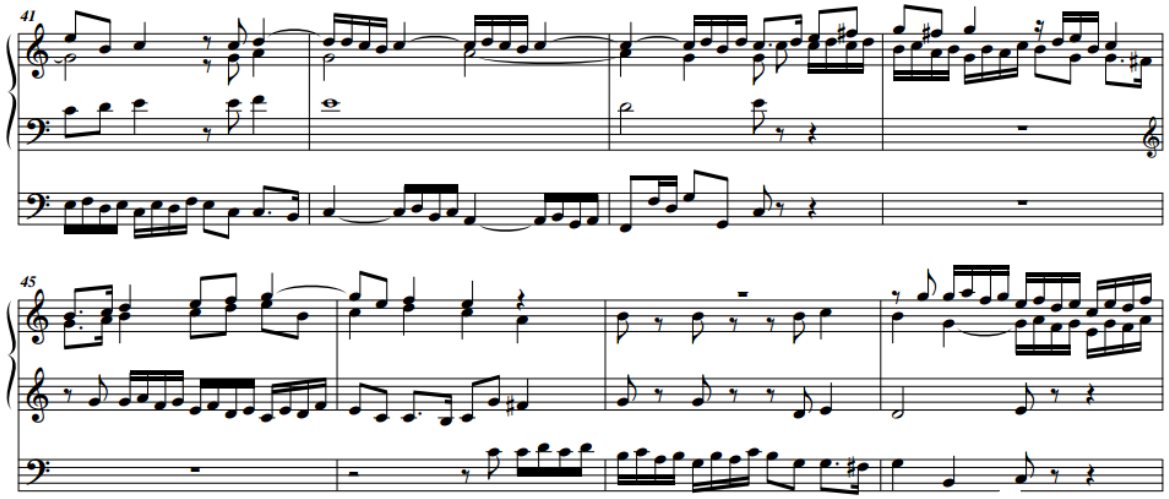


Illustration No.14 – Prelude, Fugue and Chaconne in C Major BuxWV 137 – bb.33 – 48. The fugal passage is highlighted and begins at b.36.





Looking more closely at BWV 531(ii), beneath is a table locating the subject entries. One can deduce that the tonal compass is confined to subject entries in the tonic, subdominant and dominant.

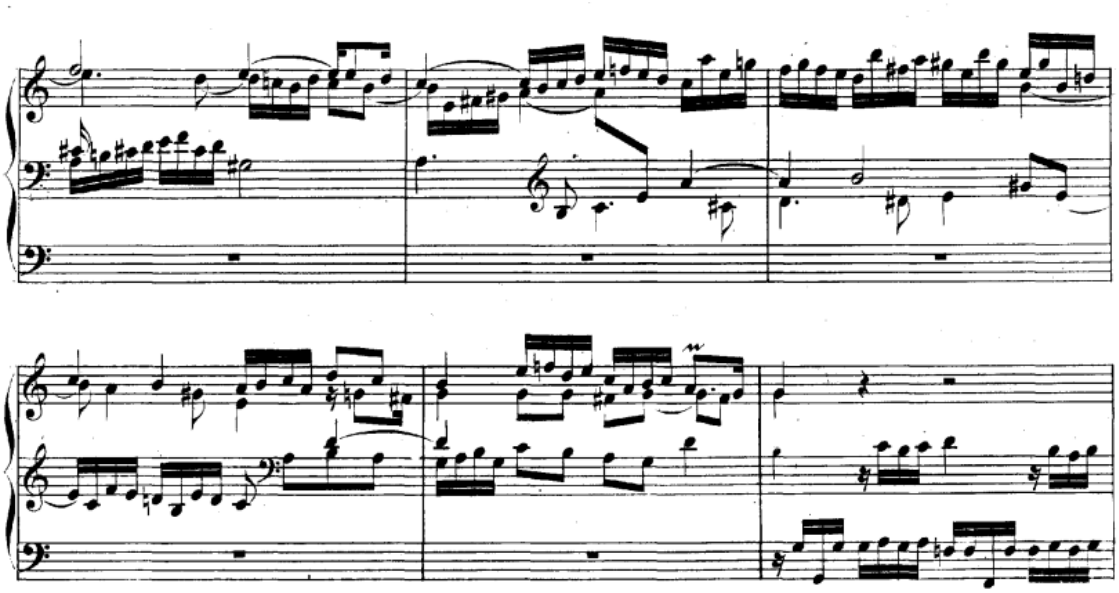
Table No.4 – the subject entries occurring throughout BWV 531.

Measure	Device	Voice
1	S	Soprano
3	S - 5	Alto
6	S - 8	Tenor
9	S - 12	Bass
14	S - 5 (False)	Soprano
14	S - 8 (False)	Alto
17	S - 11	Bass
24	S	Soprano
26	S (*per arsin et thesin)*	Soprano
36	S - 15	Bass (Pedal)
41	S – 8 (*per arsin et thesin)*	Alto
45	S - 5	Soprano
45	S – 15 (*Stretto*)	Bass
49	S – 11	Bass
53	S (*per arsin et thesin)*	Soprano
57	S - 4	Alto

The above information casts further light on the fact that this is a very early work. Firstly, the subject appears only in three different guises (S) (S – 5) and (S – 4). (S – 12) is merely (S – 5) but an octave lower, and (S – 11) is (S – 4) but an octave lower. Moreover, each voice is confined to no more than three separate registers and there is a sense of predictability here: either in the tonic, the subdominant or indeed the dominant. As such, the harmonic boundaries of this fugue are relatively narrow. Whilst there are passing modulations through A Minor (the key of the relative minor) and

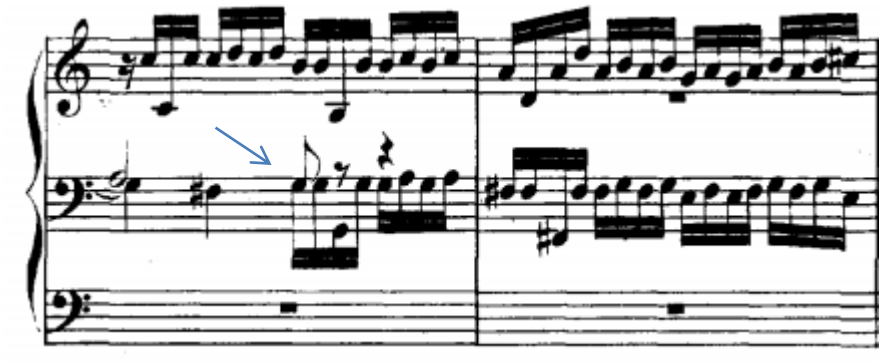
indeed G Major (the key of the dominant), there is never an official cadence or a subject entry to denote either of these keys as an area to which the music has distinctly modulated.

Illustration No.15 – BWV 531 (ii) - bb.31 – 36 – passing modulations through A Minor.



Unlike the later fugues where there is often more than one subject, or the counter subject(s) are integral to the structure, there is no regular countersubject here at all. The subject itself always appears in *rectus* and there are no other typical permutations. Bach however does use the technique of *per arsin et thesin* occasionally, e.g. in b.45, as a form of varying the rhythmic metre slightly. By doing so in this instance, the *stretto* is quite effective. Nonetheless, the successive entry does not follow the original melodic contour in its entirety.

Illustration No.16 – BWV 531 (ii) - bb.45 - 46



It is perhaps hard to understand the compositional processes behind this fugue as the emphasis is not on the skill of dense and meticulous counterpoint. In addition, it does not bear any resemblance to the majority of Bach's fugues, which illustrate well thought out and highly skilled craftsmanship. It is not to say that this fugue is not an effective work: it is from the perspective of flamboyance and

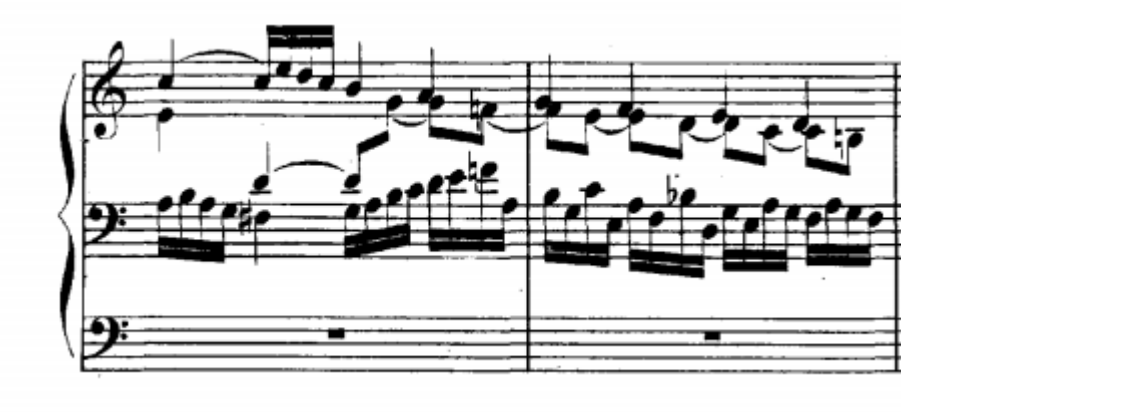
virtuosity. To this extent, it is arguable that this fugue is more akin to an improvisation, a skill which Bach was renowned to have possessed. There is considerable evidence for this. Firstly, there is a renowned anecdote when the young Bach visited the aged composer Johann Reincken (1643-1722) and upon hearing Bach's improvisation on the chorale *An Wasserflüssen Babylon* he commented 'I thought that this art was dead, but I see that it lives in you.' [31]

In addition, with the deaths of Pachelbel (1706) and Buxtehude (1707), there too was a change in compositional mentality, as the majority of these composers' works do at times exhibit improvisatory traits. With the turn of the century, the question of internal structure and architecture began to rise to the forefront, it certainly did with Bach.

> Here we may be witnessing an important division between improvisatory forms and notated music. While later composers such as Bach were want to improvise extended chorale fantasias that crossed many stylistic and formal boundaries, the music they committed to paper was considerably more cautious.[32]

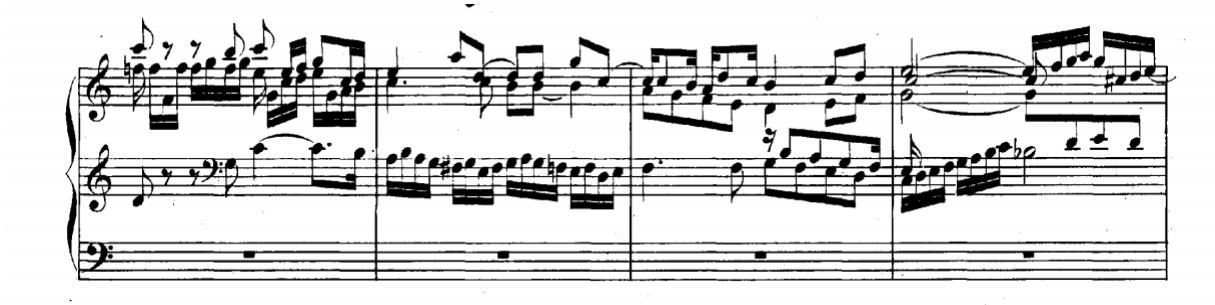
Whilst there is a structure with regards to the subject entries, the episodes are all very contrasting and freely structured. Beneath and overleaf are two examples which provide a clear illustration:

Illustration No.17 – BWV 531 (ii) – bb.12 - 13



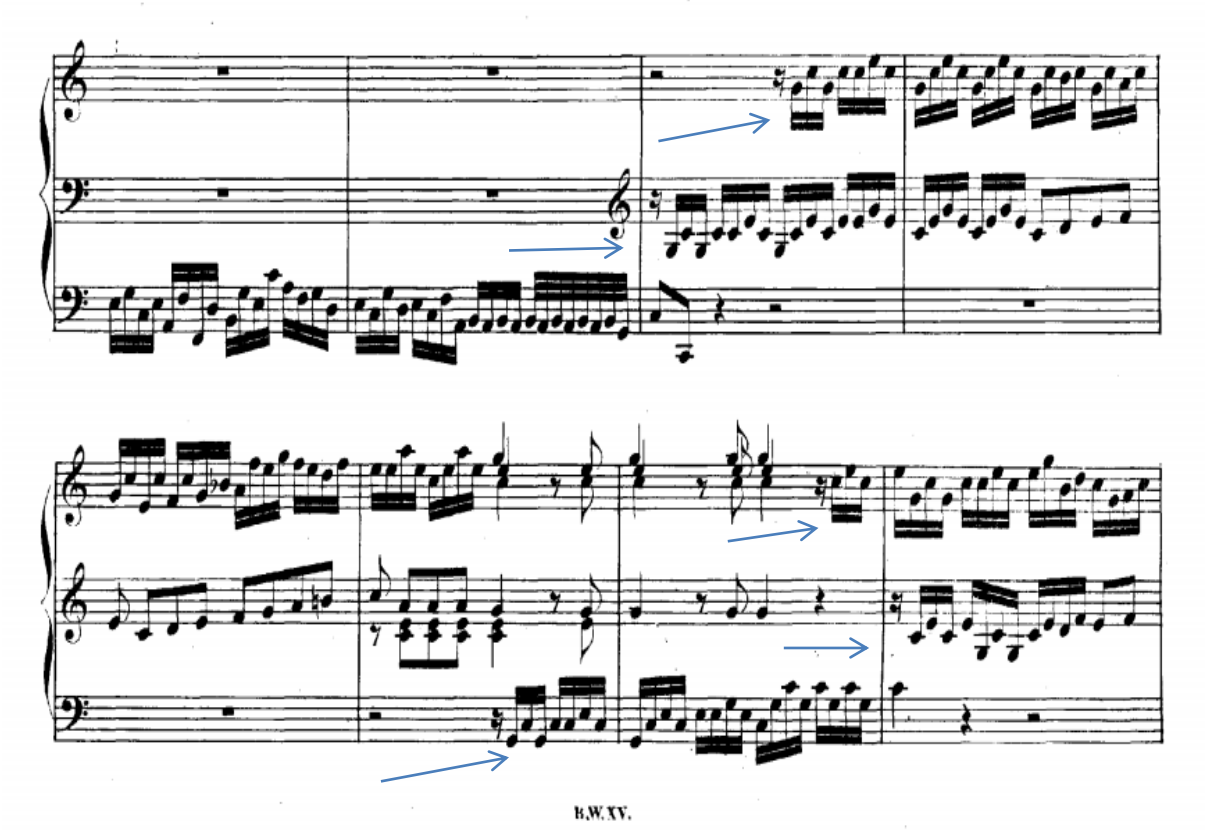
[31] *The Bach Cantatas Website* (B.C.W.) (Biographical Information on Johan Reincken).
[32] Silbiger, Alexander, *Keyboard Music before 1700* (New York, Routledge, 2004) p.189

Illustration No.18 – BWV 531 (ii) - bb.27 – 30



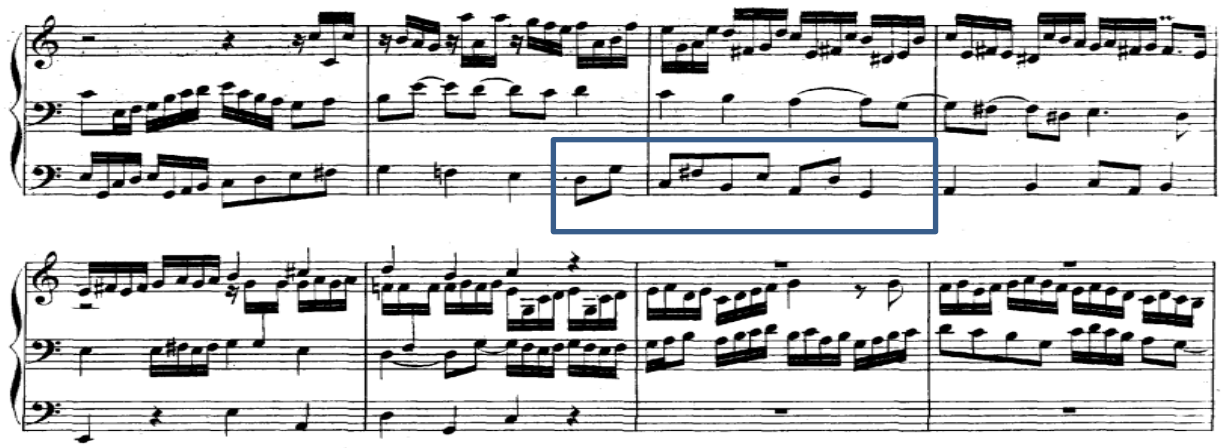
The above illustrations are all contrasting in style and there is no sense of thematic integration or continuity either with the subject or indeed with the thematic material in the episodes. In addition, if one examines the preceding Prelude, the syncopated idea that characterises the opening of the subject is present there too. This further suggests Bach's spontaneity and ability to take a relatively simple but highly malleable idea and produce works which would have no doubt sounded impressive, even though the compositional processes are not that complex.

Illustration No.19 – BWV 531 (i) – bb.8 – 15



Although perhaps a slightly bold suggestion, from this early composition, it seems Bach's primary aim is to use the organ as a vehicle for technical brilliance and that the compositional process very much plays a less substantial role. Looking at the pedal part in the fugue, it is without structure and integration with the other voices, and is really no more than a reinforcement of the bass. The sequence in b.38/39 could not emphasise this any more clearly: the pedal shadows the tenor line very closely.

Illustration No.20 – BWV 531 (ii) – bb.37 - 44



When one considers what the purpose of this fugue may have been, a fundamental answer can be found in the fact that there is a cadenza. As already discussed, the fluid and improvised nature, rather than meticulously worked out counterpoint and dissonance, is designed to impress the listener. To the lay listener, this piece is arguably effective as the purpose is distinctly clear: to impress through the use of technical bravura. In BWV 531 (ii) the compositional procedures are not that complex. It could even be argued that the question of fugal composition was not at the forefront of the young Bach's mind. The fugue was probably composed when Bach was applying for organist posts, where virtuosity was no doubt a more attractive asset than compositions which were overly complex and quite possibly not understood. Bach was relatively nomadic as a young adult, travelling through Germany and impressing audiences as he came, Lüneburg (1700-02), Weimar (1703) Arnstadt (1703-05), Mülhausen (1705-07), before settling to some extent in Weimar (1708-17). It is therefore fairly convincing that BWV 531 (ii) can be seen as a fugue which was designed to impress primarily through the use of keyboard technique, rather than as a work of intellectual complexity.

CHAPTER 2

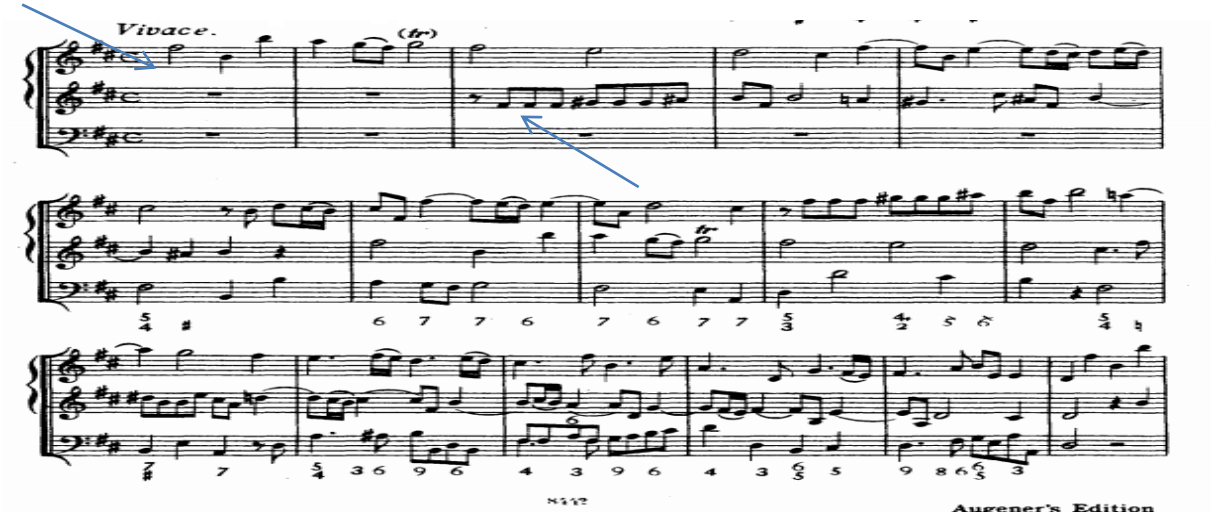
Fugue in B Minor - BWV 579 – The influence of Italian and Dutch composers

When Bach was in his early to mid - twenties (1707-10), he undertook an extensive study of Italian trio sonatas, chamber music and *concerti grossi*. There are so many examples of this Italian influence in Bach's compositions, and to name them all would be exhaustive, but particularly relevant works are BWV 593, 594 and 596: they are all organ concertos which are arranged from Violin concertos or concertos for two violins by Antonio Vivaldi. Unlike Handel, who travelled extensively to Italy in his early career, Bach always remained in Germany. Nonetheless, Bach's move to Weimar in 1708 meant that he was now able to be immersed in a wealth of musical genres:

> There was also an orchestra in the court of Wilhelm (Ernst) devoted to the Italian concerto, a genre which was sweeping the European continent at that time. Almost certainly, the concertos of Vivaldi were part of their repertoire. It was in this musical court of Weimar that Bach transcribed two concertos by the young Prince Johann (BWV 592, 595) as well as three concertos by Vivaldi for solo organ (BWV 593, in A minor; 594, in C; and 596, in D minor). [33]

Fugue in B Minor BWV 579 is an early work but it exhibits the beginning of Bach's closer attention to thematic development and permutation and the work as a whole is far more concentrated. Unlike BWV 531 (ii), BWV 579 is not a work which is designed to impress, nor does it exhibit a work akin to an improvisation. Moreover, Bach has not taken Corelli's theme and cast a whole set of variations through related keys and forms: rather, it is an expansion of two thematic ideas which are kept relatively coherent throughout and do not undergo any permutations, for example by inversion.

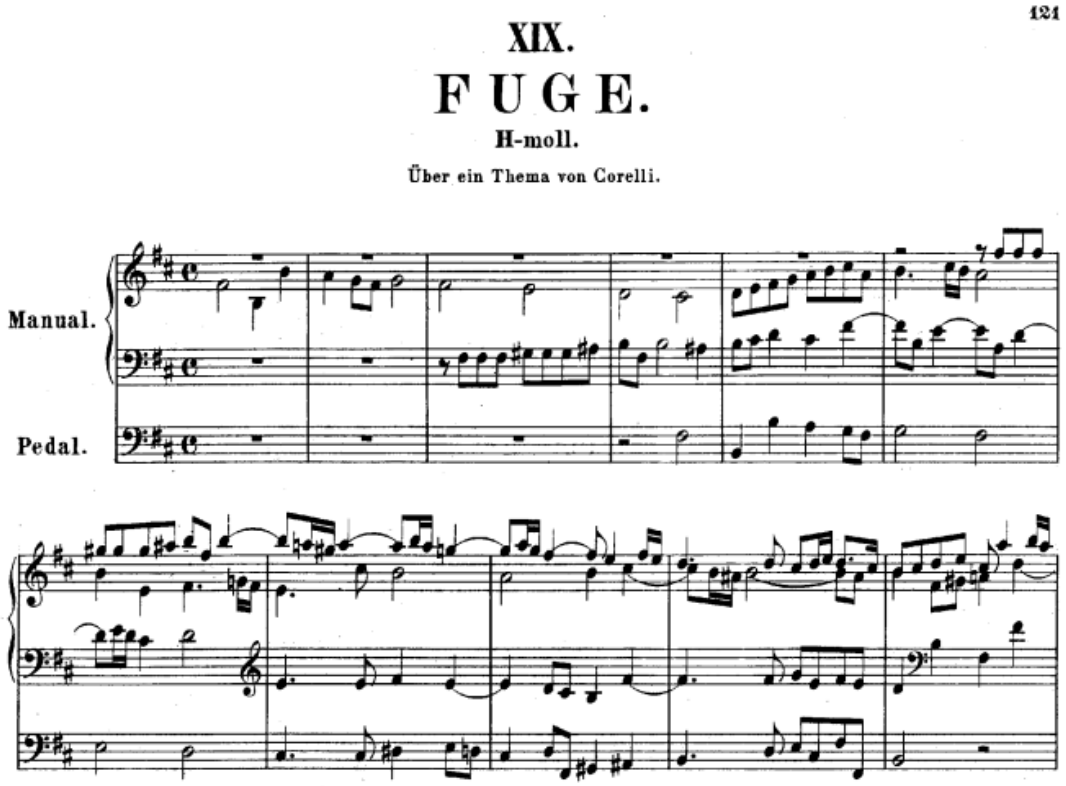
Illustration No.21 – Trio Sonata Op. 3 No.4 (2nd Movement) – A. Corelli



[33] Cheung, Vincent, 'Bach the transcriber : His Organ Concertos after Vivaldi' (2000) (Online document) p.1

There are several unusual features of this fugue. Firstly, the placement of the subject and the countersubject are not as one would expect. The countersubject begins before the end of the principal subject's statement (b.3): it is thus *in locum* of the answer form. Furthermore, whereas it is usually the custom for the second entry of the *principal* subject to take the form of an answer (this could be in the dominant, a tonal alteration or the subdominant), in this case, it is still in the tonic (b.4). Throughout this fugue, the harmonic compass is confined to three possibilities: the principal subject in the tonic, the answer form (tonal alteration) and the subject in the key of the dominant. There are no subject statements in *any* of the other related keys.

Illustration No.22 – BWV 579 – bb.1 – 11.



Referring back to the thematic ideas of the Corelli trio-sonata movement, Bach has taken the two opening ideas and has inserted them as the subject and countersubject. The countersubject is always regular throughout the fugue where there is a full statement of the principal subject. Some would argue that on the surface, this fugue does show a much more sophisticated approach to fugal composition and that it exhibits much closer attention to detail. However, the tonal plan is not complex and the harmonic boundaries are relatively confined. Certainly, the sophistication concerning the effortless invertible nature of both the principal subject and secondary subject are considerable, but the harmonic scope is nonetheless quite limited. It is worth pointing out that the

harmonic vocabulary with regards to the tonal areas of the subject entries is almost identical to BWV 531 (ii) – a) Principal subject in the tonic, b) answer form (tonal alteration) and c) the use of the principal subject in the dominant**.**

It has to be said that both the principal subject and secondary subject are not that thematically inspiring. They are, however, very malleable: in some ways, BWV 579 can be seen as an exhibition of using the subjects as the background and the episodic material more in the foreground. This of course almost reverses the role of such compositional traits in fugue. However, this is not that dissimilar to the compositional logic behind a passacaglia or a chaconne: the ground bass is maintained throughout. However, for the genre to be successful, it is the variations which must be strong. In the case of BWV 579, whilst the subject is not varied, there is far greater interest with regard to the treatment and development of the episodic material.

It seems that the purpose of this fugue is to explore the trio-sonata texture and to absorb the early – mid Baroque Italian textural and harmonic language. There is also undoubtedly a sense of *concerto grosso* structure as the episodic material is very contrasting to the subject entries. However, it is not as clear or distinct as some of the later organ fugues.

As the table beneath illustrates, there is a recurring countersubject throughout. Bach clearly develops the notion of invertible counterpoint yet the tonal compass is still closely confined as there is no attempt of any distinct form of modulation to a related major or secondary related major or minor.

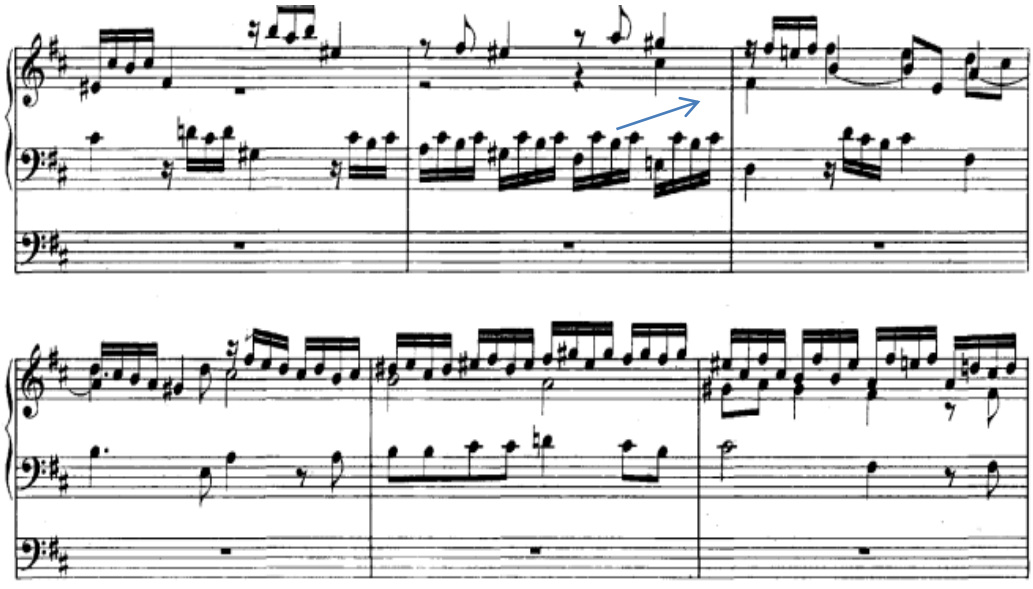
Table No.5 – the Subject entries that occur throughout BWV 579.

Measure	**Device**	**Voice**
1	S	Alto
3	CS	Tenor
4	S – 8 (*per arsin et thesin)*	Bass (Pedal)
6	CS + 15 (*per arsin et thesin)*	Soprano
11	S – 5	Tenor
13	CS – 4	Bass (Pedal)
21	S	Alto
23	CS	Tenor
31	S – 8	Tenor
32	CS – 8	Bass (Pedal)
37	S + 5	Soprano
39	CS + 5	Alto
49	S + 8	Soprano
51	CS	Tenor
53	S – 8 (*per arsin et thesin*)	Bass (Pedal)
55	CS + 8 (*per arsin et thesin)*	Alto

67	S + 5 (*per arsin et thesin*)	Alto
70	CS (altered*)	Tenor
73	S – 8 (*per arsin et thesin)*	Bass (Pedal)
75	CS + 3 (*per arsin et thesin*)	Tenor
90	S – 8	Bass (Pedal)
90	S – 5	Tenor
91	S + 8	Soprano
91	S + 4	Alto
93	CS	Tenor
93	CS - 10	Bass (Pedal)
94	CS + 6	Alto
94	CS + 11	Soprano
96	S + 8	Soprano
98	CS - 8	Bass (Pedal)

The craftsmanship of this fugue is considerable in that the subject and countersubject appear effortlessly within the texture – almost to the point that Bach sometimes does try to conceal the entries. Moreover, without careful analysis, it is easy to simply gloss over the subject entries as they frequently appear slightly hidden within the texture. The diagram beneath (bb.66 – 71) is a clear example: the entry of both the subject and countersubject attract the least interest compared with the other surrounding thematic ideas.

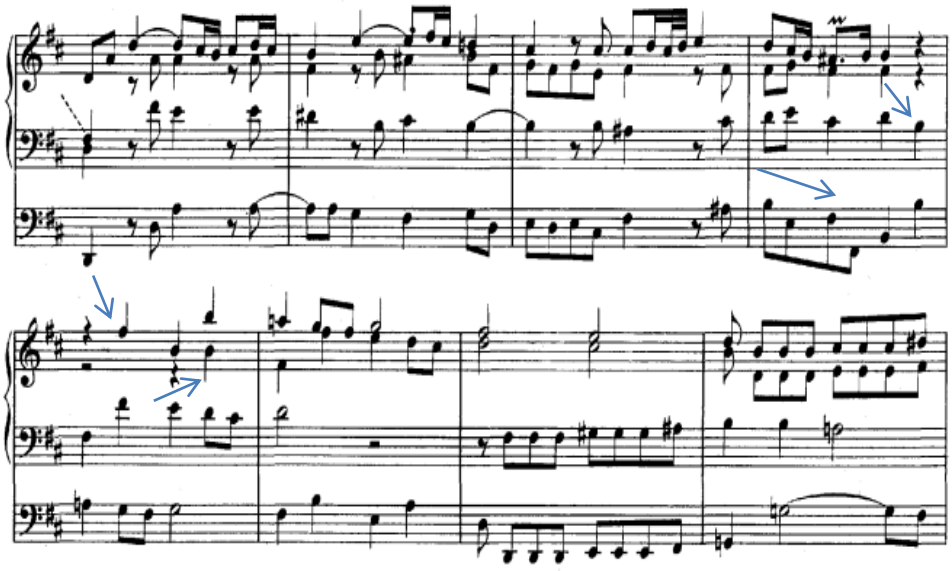
Illustration No.23 – BWV 579 – bb.66 – 71.



Whilst this is an early fugue, it does nonetheless demonstrate Bach's evolving style. This fugue is not about virtuosity; if anything, it shows curiosity with the Italian genre of the trio sonata. It also questions the very structure of fugue as to how a fugal argument should work: what should be the most important musical idea? Furthermore, we begin to see the more intellectual approach and that

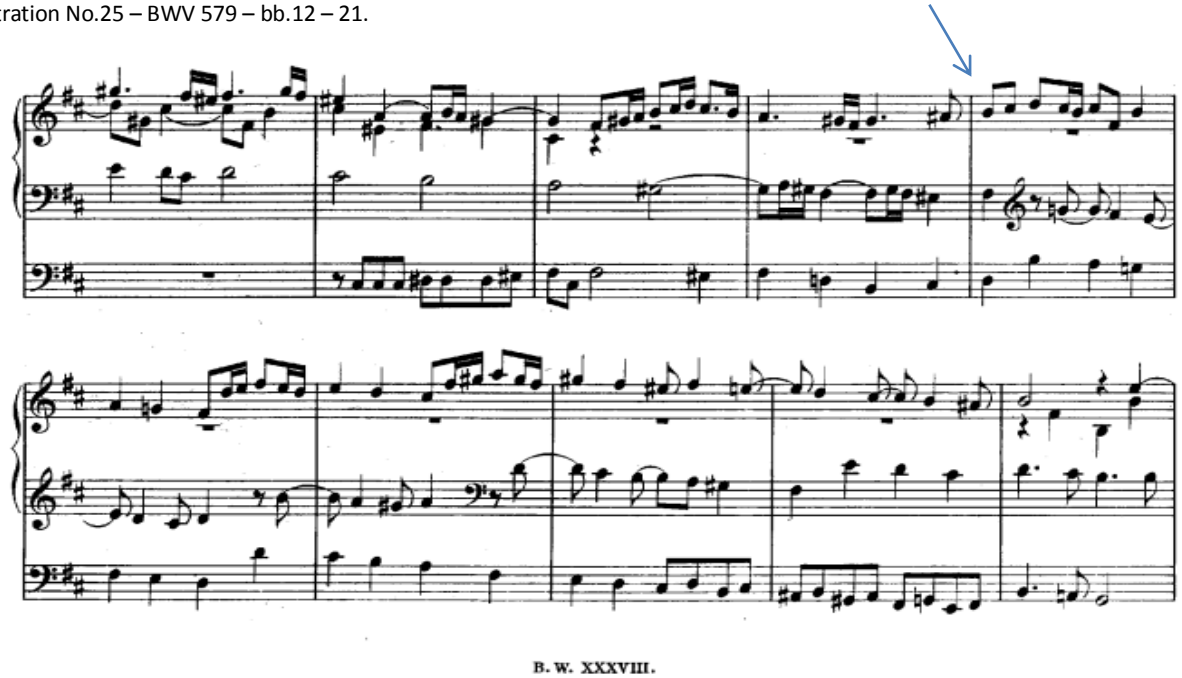
of ‘fugal architecture’. It is as though Bach is beginning to prove his skills as a contrapuntal composer, albeit at this stage still within confined harmonic boundaries. Nonetheless, the *stretto* in b.91/92 is considerable, not least through its effortlessness but also from the practicality of being able to locate and identify a subject: very few subjects are as malleable as this.

Illustration No.24 – BWV 579 – bb.87 – 94.



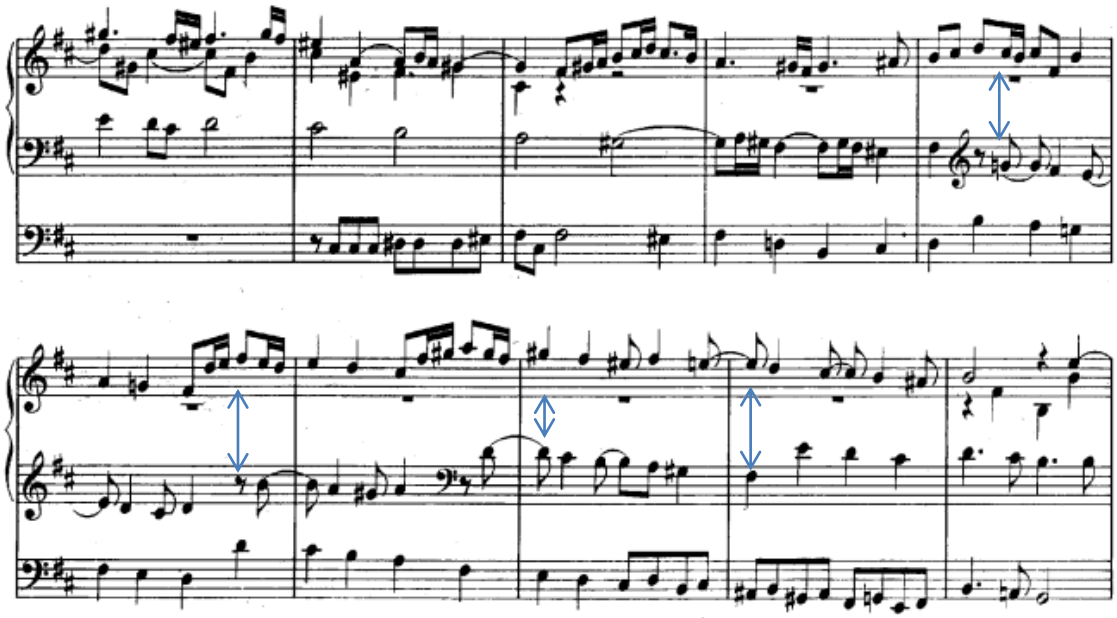
Now looking to the episodic material, it is of particular interest, arguably more-so than the subject or countersubject entries. It is through the episodic passages that there is greater harmonic and thematic interest. The first substantial episode occurs between bb.16 – 20.

Illustration No.25 – BWV 579 – bb.12 – 21.



Whilst bb.16–20 is freely woven counterpoint and without rigid form it is by no means a passage of 'free - wheeling'. This could be labelled Episodic passage '1'. Firstly, one can tell that Bach has studied the tessituras of the Corelli trio sonatas because of the spacing and voice leading here. Over the course of the four bars, the suspensions become increasingly more yearning owing to the gradual increase in spacing and exposed nature of each line.

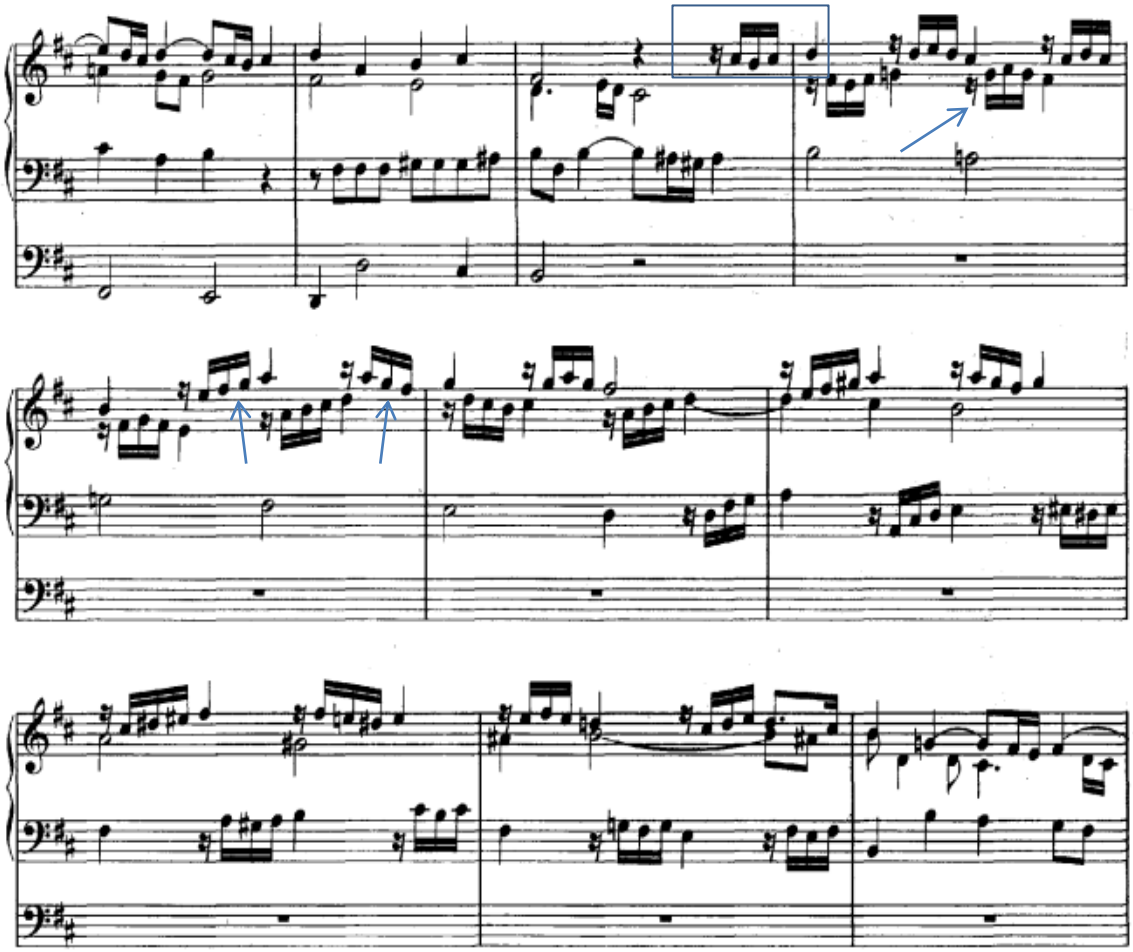
Illustration No.26 – BWV 579 – bb.12 - 21 exhibiting the differences in tessitura.



The harmonic rhythm in b.20 is particularly clever. Firstly, the 7/6 suspensions between the soprano and tenor are probably the most obvious. What is less obvious is the carefully constructed bass line which defines the overall harmonic progression 6/5 – 5/3. In addition, the step-wise downward movement of the pedal, which itself is constructed over a cycle of 5ths, adds further to the evolution of the harmonic progression. To find such sophistication within one bar (which in itself is not particularly important to the overall fugue) is quite remarkable, and certainly shows Bach stretching the potential of what is relatively simple episodic material.

The next episode on the following page (Episodic passage '2' – bb.25 - 30) demonstrates this technique of economy coupled with imagination, even more so as it uses just one simple rhythmic idea beginning in the soprano at b.24.

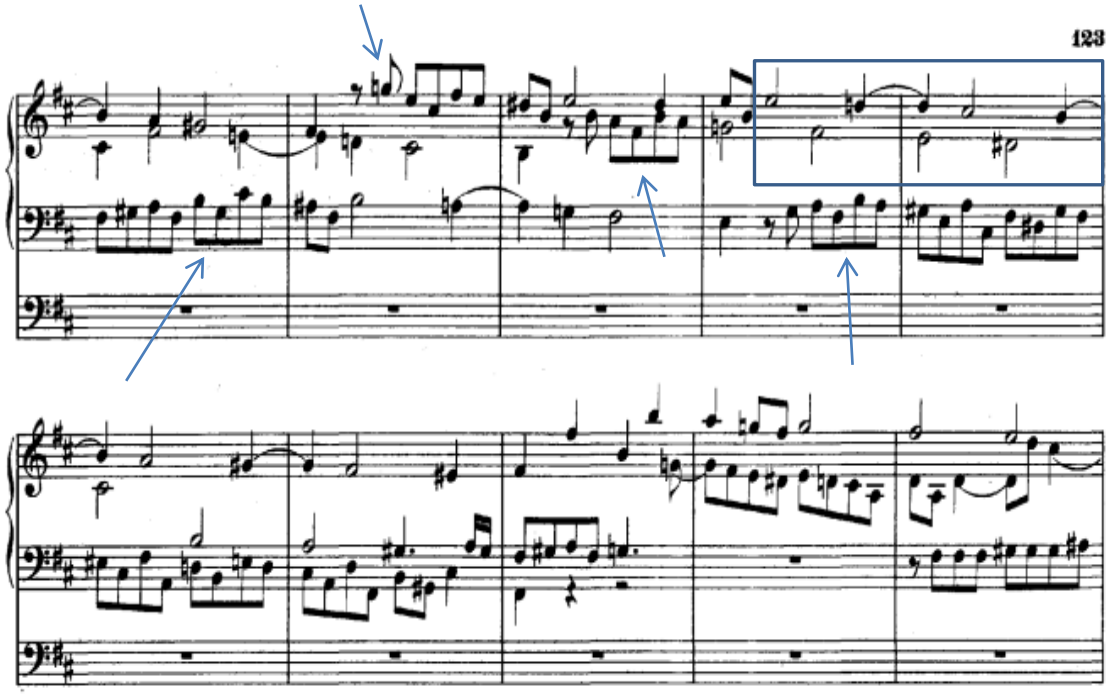
Illustration No.27 – BWV 579 – bb.22 – 31.



Bach predominantly uses three further related ideas – 1) the inversion (b.25 - alto), 2) 'a' – (b.26 – Soprano), 3) 'a – inversion' (b.26 – Soprano). The antiphonal effect thereafter is considerable.

The next passage of episodic material (Episodic passage '3', albeit with two constituents *x* and *y*) illustrates similar techniques and occurs between bb.42 – 48. Again, Bach takes a simple melodic idea (x) which is derived from b.42 and b.43 and forms a sequence using a cycle of 5ths in the bass from b.45. In the upper voices there is a chain of 7/6 suspensions (*y*). The results are effective and effortless in their transformation. Whilst the aforementioned harmonic tools are often used by Baroque composers and indeed quite frequently by Bach, great attention is paid to the voice leading and how the individual melodic lines are constructed to be as florid and cohesive as possible. By contrast, many *lesser* composers often use sequential harmonic formulae for compositionally contrasting passages which are invariably looser in structure. With Bach, these passages frequently undergo much more compositional integrity and sophistication.

Illustration No.28 – BWV 579 – bb.42 – 51.



What is perhaps arguably a unique feature of this fugue is that whereas one often finds a unification or succession of the separate subjects encountered (often in the recapitulation – as will be explained in other fugues under analysis), in this case, there is a succession of some of the previously encountered *episodic material*. Beneath and overleaf are references to both Episodic passages '2' and '3' (both constituents of '3').

Illustration No.29 – BWV 579 – bb.57 – 65.

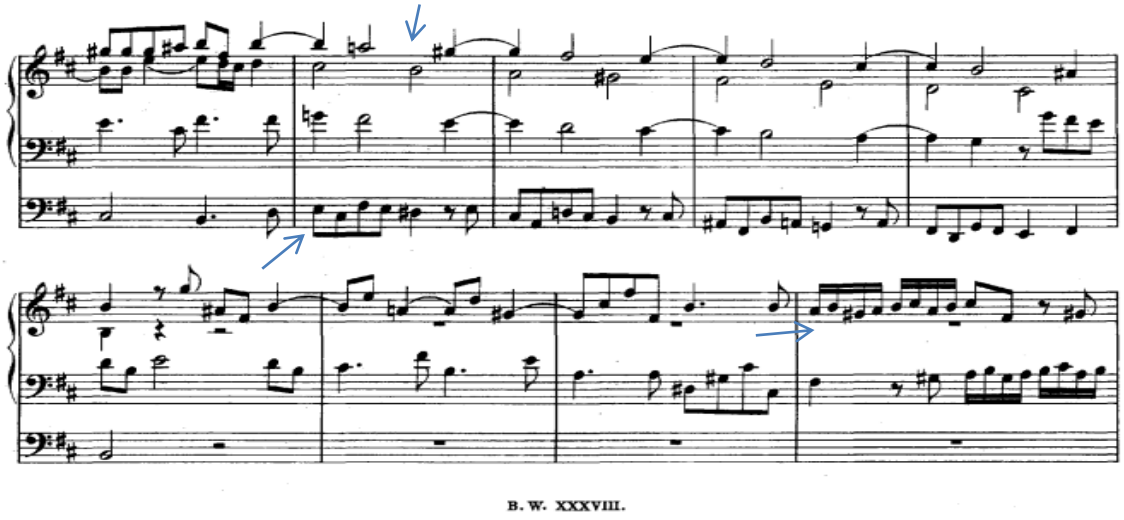
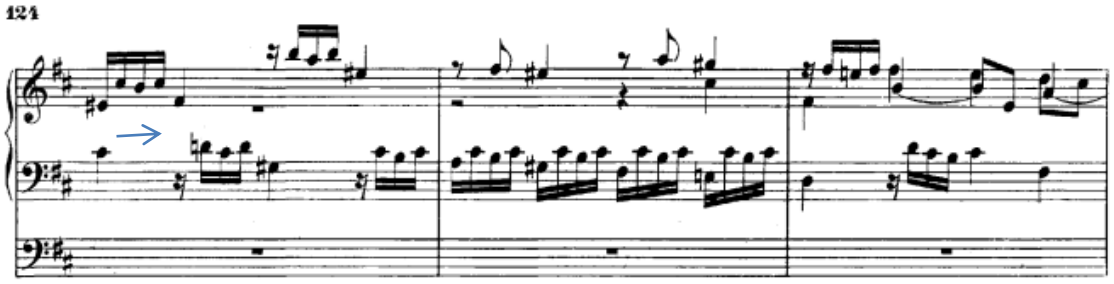


Illustration No.30 – BWV 579 – bb.66 – 68.



Whilst the effect is not literally that of 'copy and paste', one can nevertheless see the origins of the episodic materials and they are developed considerably more than one might expect. The final noteworthy passage of episodic material which is the longest of all occurs between bb.77 – 90. On the one hand, it shows Bach's skill to easily adapt and then expand initial ideas (the sequence beginning in b.79 is very similar to the sequences beginning at b.45 or b.58). However, there are two more important aspects. Firstly, it is how Bach by c.1708 had learnt the craft of invertible counterpoint (particularly in the episodes) so fluently: a trait not found in BWV 531 (ii). Secondly, through the use of episodes, there is a far greater sense of internal structure which suggests an echo of *Ritornello* form, whereby the subject is treated as the *ritornello* theme.

Illustration No.31 – BWV 579 – bb.75 – 82.

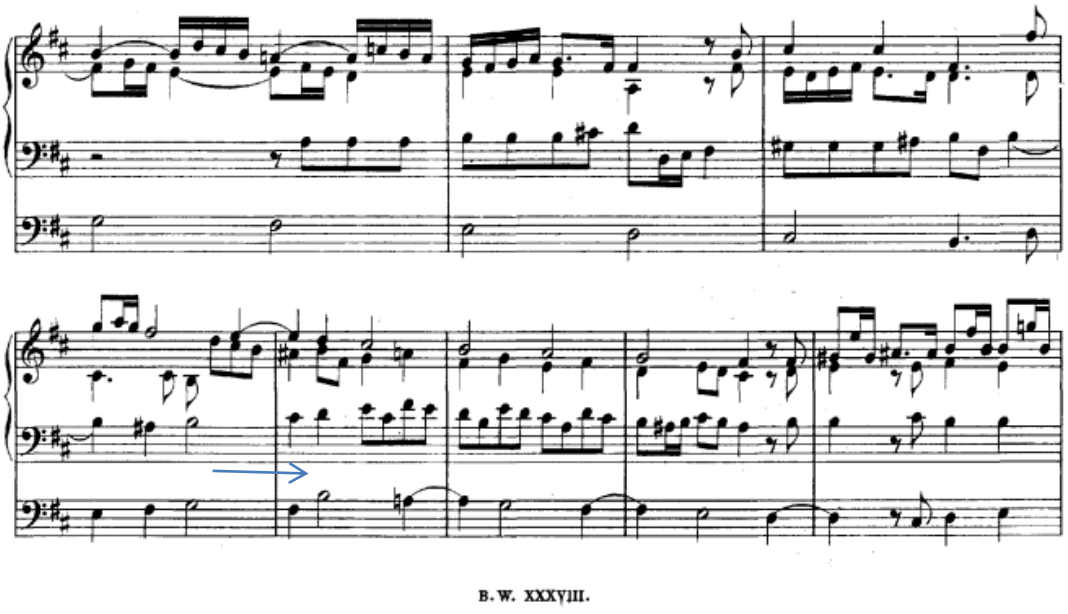
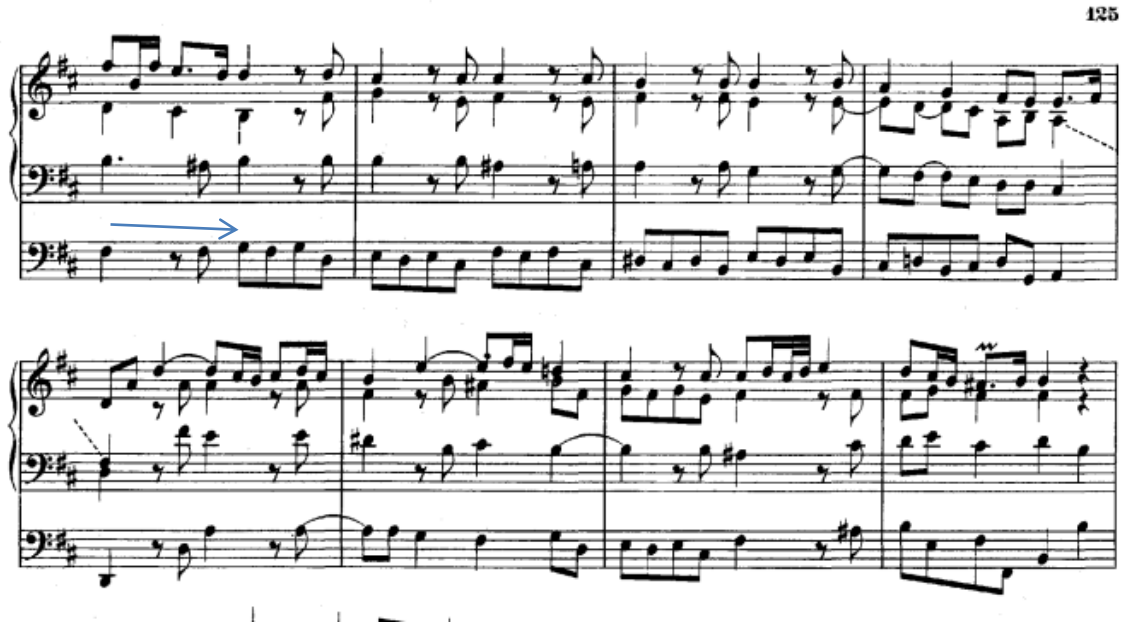


Illustration No.32 – BWV 579 – bb.83 – 90.

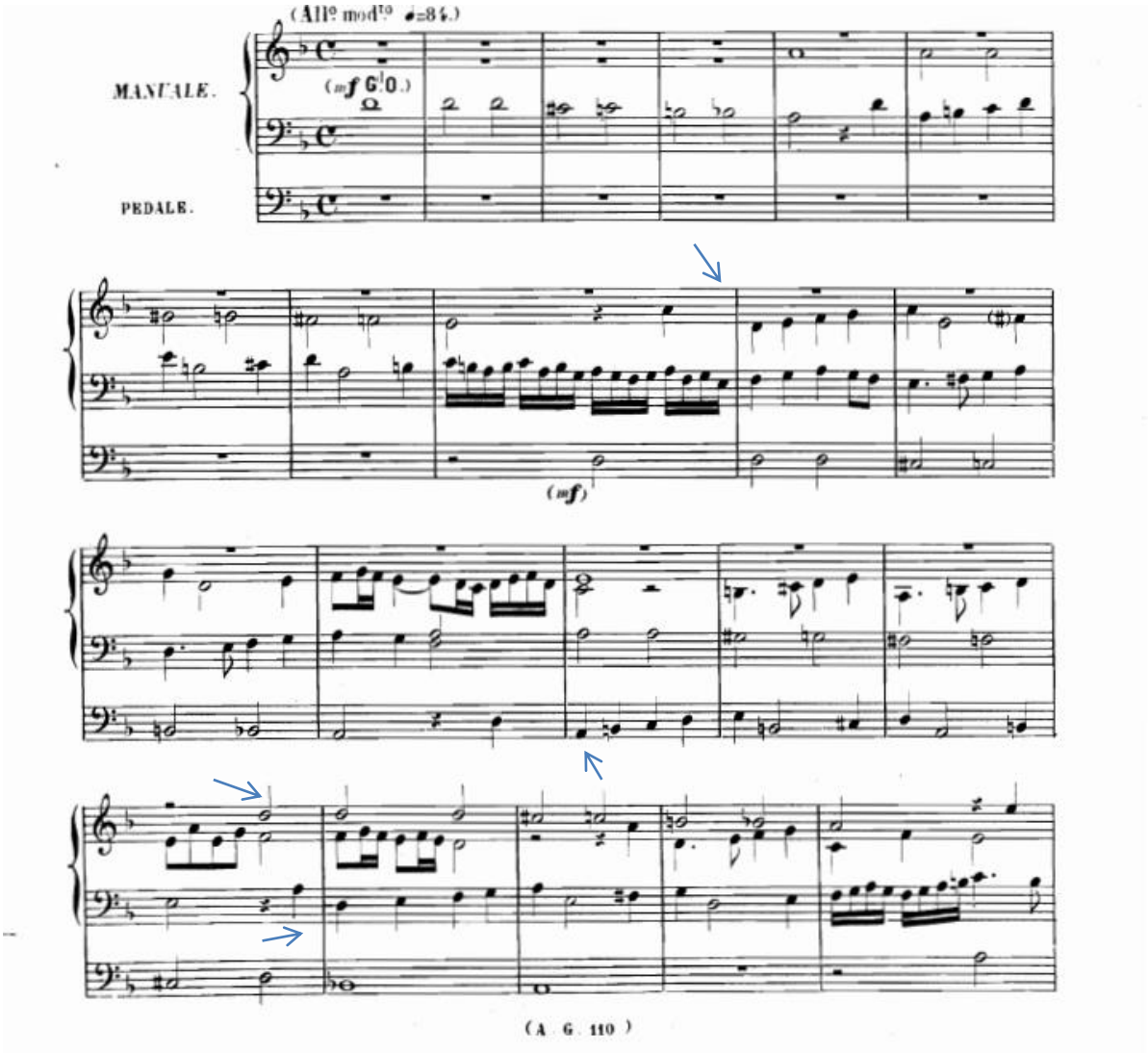


Commentators often talk of composers being affiliated to the 'North German organ school' and readily associate Böhm, Reincken and Buxtehude with the concept. One vital aspect of this fugue is the discipline of the rhetorical practice of invertibility between subject and countersubject. Where, it might be asked, did Bach learn to handle this practice with such dexterity and calculation? If Bach also *solely* belonged to this school, where and how did he learn the art (indeed artifice) of regular invertible counterpoint? Clearly, each of the aforementioned composers uses invertibility to some extent, but rarely is it worked out so meticulously and carefully or for such a prolonged length of time. Moreover, extended invertible counterpoint is rarely found in the trio sonatas of Corelli. In fact, it was not from these sources that Bach gleaned this technique but rather from the influence and example of both Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562-1621) and Girolamo Frescobaldi who are of much greater interest in connexion with this issue. In both these composers we can observe much more systematic use of invertible counterpoint. The statement beneath and extract overleaf provide clear and unequivocal evidence of this influence:

> He also made a manuscript copy of the *Fiori Musicali* of Frescobaldi . In the very earliest stages of his education Bach may also have studied such a volume as the *Wegweiser* organ tutor, published in Augsburg in 1689, a volume containing instruction in the basic rudiments of music and a considerable number of brief pieces in various styles , largely intended as a stimulus to the beginner composer and improviser. [34]

[34]Hansell, David, 'Changing *structures in German organ music from 1600 to the death of J.S. Bach'* (Durham: Durham theses, Durham University,1980), p.29

Illustration No.33 - Chromatic Fantasia in D Minor, J.P. Sweelinck – bb.1 – 21.



The term 'fugue' was not a term which was applied by Sweelinck to his works for keyboard. In addition, the genre was not yet established. Whilst the above clearly demonstrates fugal techniques, it is nonetheless entitled as 'Fantasia'. The invertibility of both the subject and indeed counter – subject is effective, and this serves as a far clearer inspiration with regards to such techniques than the more loosely structured works in the *stylus phantasticus*.

> A parallel line of influence was evident in organ playing and composition, for in the person of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck the Netherlands boasted an organist who matched the reputation of the organs themselves. Although Sweelinck's finest compositions are arguably his fantasias, it was his work in the field of *cantus firmus* elaboration that was to have the most significant effect on contemporary German composers. Several Germans studied with Sweelinck, a fact that is neatly exemplified in a surviving variation set on the chorale Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr which contains verses composed by his pupils Andreas Düben, Peter Hasse and Gottfried (brother of Samuel) Scheidt. But the finest German composers to benefit from study in Amsterdam were Jacob Praetorius (son of Hieronymus)and Heinrich Scheidemann from Hamburg, and Samuel Scheidt from Halle. If the music of Hieronymus Praetorius and his contemporaries reflects an already flourishing school of organ playing at the turn of the seventeenth century, the work of this Sweelinck-influenced

> trio marked the beginnings of the great period of north German organ music that lasted throughout the seventeenth century.[35]

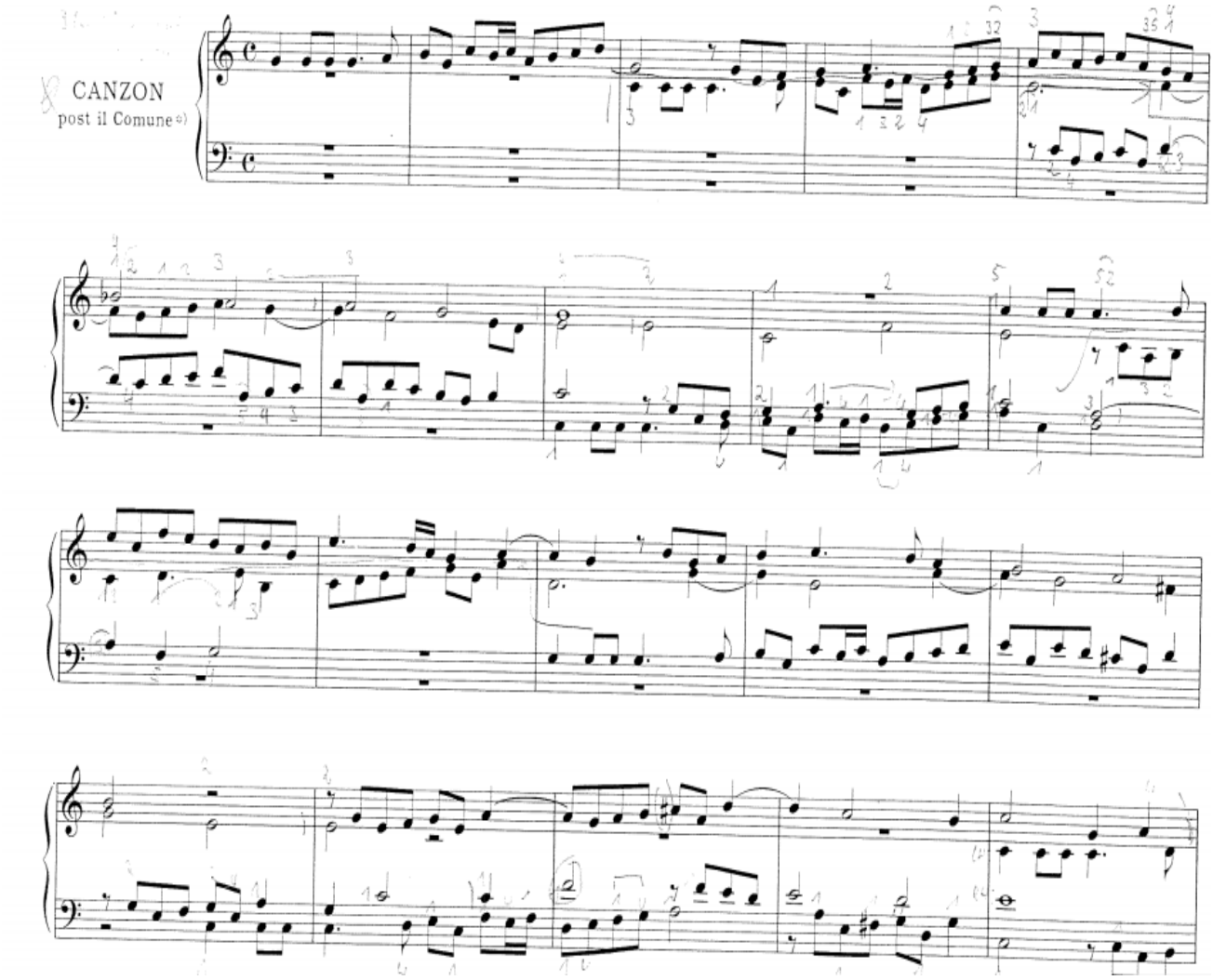
If one perceives this 'chromatic subject' as a *cantus firmus* , one can then see Sweelinck's masterful handling. Bach would have undoubtedly perceived this and indeed filtered it through to his own compositions, albeit well over half a century later.

> Accordingly, we find no mention in the inventory of the manuscripts of his works which it is known were mainly passed on to the eldest sons, Wilhelm Friedemann and Carl Philipp Emanuel. Even though the twelfth chapter of the inventory is devoted to books, not one of them is a musical work. Books that are known to have been in his possession (such as Fux's *Gradus ad Parnassum* and Ammerbach's *Orgel oder Instrument Tabulatur*) and books that are most likely to have been in his library (such as Neumeister's collections of cantata texts and the Schemelli *Gesangbuch*) are not even hinted at in the inventory of Bach's estate. [36]

Whilst the above more than suggests that we will never know which scores of music Bach had in his possession, we can do more than merely surmise at the fact that Bach may have known of Sweelinck's works. Bach's music illustrates many of the same processes. A similar line of argument can also be provided with the keyboard works of Frescobaldi. Many of his keyboard works also illustrate the craft of invertible counterpoint and many display fugal compositional techniques. Overleaf is a brief extract from Frescobaldi's *Fiori Musicali* (1635), where the skill of invertible textures is abundantly apparent:

[35] Webber, Geoffrey, 'The North German Organ School' in *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ*, Geoffrey Webber(ed.) and Nicholas Thistlethwaite (ed.) (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999) p. 223
[36] Leaver, Robin, 'Leipzig's Rejection of Bach - Part II' in *Riemenschneider Bach Institute , Vol. 3 No. 4* (October 1972) p.3

Illustration No.34 – *Canzon post il Comune* from G. Frescobaldi's *Fiori Musicali*.



Consequently, the contrapuntal nature of BWV 579 is not akin to what we might perceive to be of directly German influence. Rather, as discussed above, Sweelinck and Frescobaldi are perhaps of greater influence in this fugue.

The final aspect of this fugue which must be considered is that of concerto form. The similarities between fugue and concerto form, or particularly ritornello form (whereby the same thematic idea stated at the offset is re-introduced in different keys throughout the passage), are not that dissimilar.

> Much ink has been spilled over the etymology and semantic ramifications of the word concerto. It goes back ultimately to the Latin verb *concertare*, the primary meaning of which is 'to compete'. As used in Italian, however, the same word has the radically different meaning of 'to agree', a sense that survives in such cognate English phrases as 'in concert' or 'a concerted effort.[37]

It is clear from BWV 579 that both the Italian and Latin etymology apply to how the overall structure fits together. On the one hand, the episodic materials are competing as forms of musical rhetoric between themselves. In addition they, as a cohort, are competing against the statements of the subject. On the other hand, the overall impression is one of agreement, and Bach has taken the nature of fugue beyond merely subject entries contrasted by episodes. Rather, it is beginning to take the guise of a rhetorical form with differing levels of internal structures which can only be revealed upon much closer inspection. BWV 579 reflects Bach's increasingly intellectual approach to Fugue.

[37] Talbot, Michael, 'The Italian concerto in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries' in *The Cambridge Companion to the Concerto* ed. Simon Keefe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) p.35

CHAPTER 3

Fugue in D Minor - BWV 565 (ii) - The Progressive Stage

This work and its preceding toccata are undeniably shrouded in controversy regarding authenticity. Certainly, there is no original manuscript by the hand of Bach – the oldest copy belonging to the German composer Johannes Ringk (1717-78) who was a pupil of Johan Peter Kellner (1705-72) who was in turn an acquaintance of Bach. Many scholars have tried to prove and disprove the authenticity, and yet there is still no definitive answer. Three possible composers who have thus far been considered the likely source are: Wilhelm Friedmann Bach, Johannes Ludwig Krebs (1713-80) and the aforementioned Johan Peter Kellner. The most extensive study to date on the work was published in 1998 by Rolf Dietrich Claus which suggests that is an unusual work written much later than one might expect, and is unlikely to be by Bach. There is a wide variety of other articles by critics such as Peter Williams, David Humphreys, David Schulenberg and Roger Bullivant who follow a similar line of argument citing the work as compositionally weak. Yet, none of these is able to pinpoint and argue extensively the strengths of the compositional craftsmanship within this fugue. Christoph Wolff claims it is by Bach but ultimately, this fugue has not been under sufficient analytical scrutiny as actually, there are a lot of hidden traits.

Another line of argument is that the work is a transcription perhaps from that of a solo violin sonata. Whilst this would explain the potential lack of contrapuntal density or slightly dilute fugal writing, it does nothing to really illuminate the situation. Whilst some commentators have suggested that the composer could well have been one of the aforementioned people, not one of them has ever fully asserted that the work is doubtful and can prove beyond doubt that it is not by Bach. Therefore, it seems a more constructive approach to consider why this work *is* by Bach, certainly in the light of there being some processes present which have already been discussed in the previous two analyses of BWV 531 (ii) and BWV 579.

The aforementioned critics all cite ‘weaknesses’ throughout certain areas of the fugue. The first ‘weakness’ is the subject itself with the oscillating pincer like movement. Attention has been drawn to the lack of melodic interest as well as the sustained inner pedal note (A). However, a work by Bach which also contains a very similar idea regarding an inner or implied pedal note is the Fugue in C Minor BWV 575.

Illustration No.35 – BWV 565 – bb.28 – 31. (Note that the two works are not separated, the bar numbers continue regardless of the fugue).

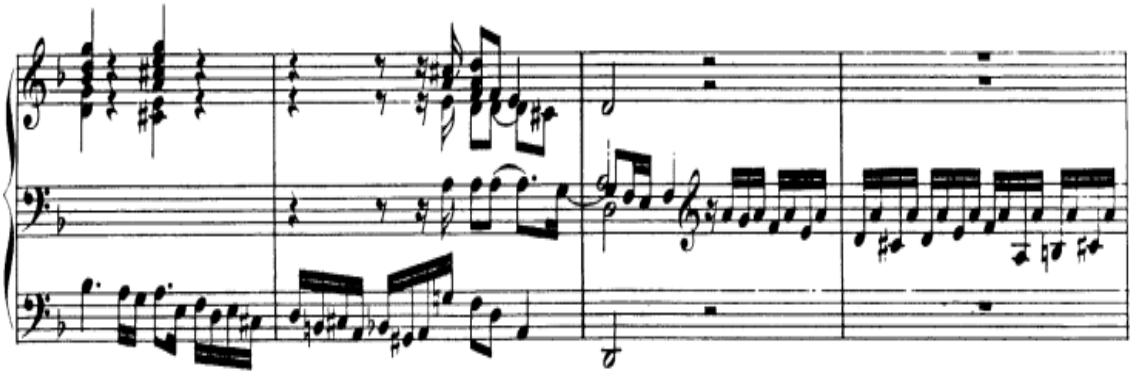
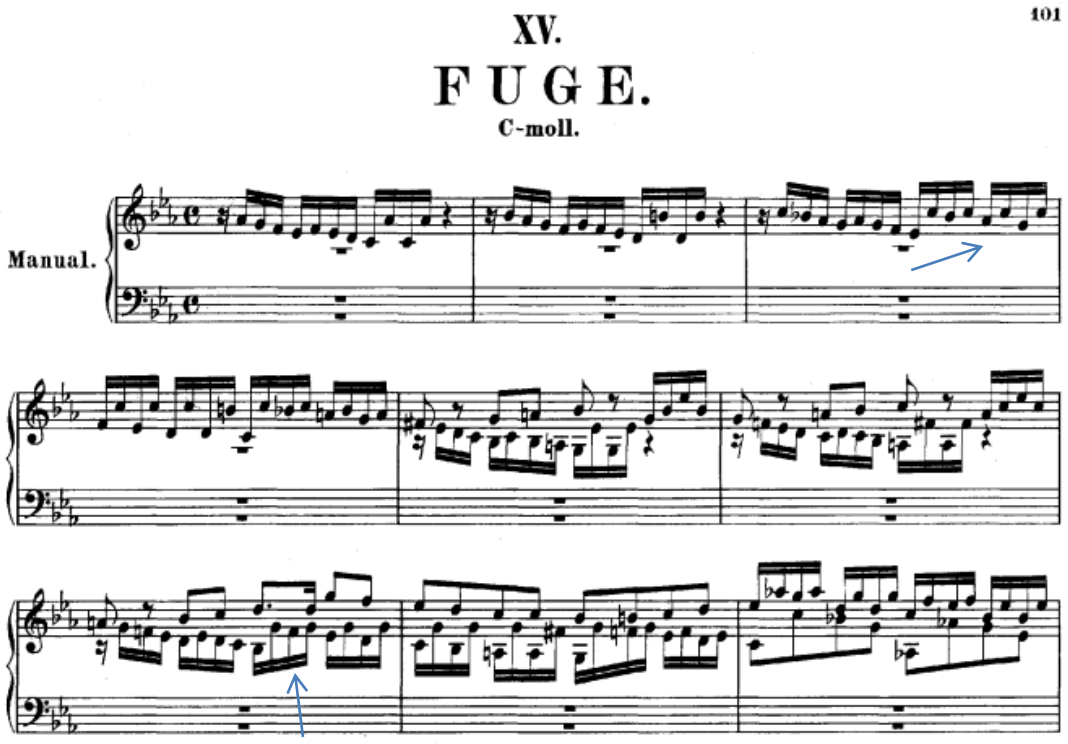


Illustration No.36 – BWV 575 – bb.1 – 9.



Certainly, one can see the potential function of the inner pedal as a violin player for BWV 565 – the recurring 'A' in the opening subject statement would be played on the open string. Bach was also a formidable violinist, so it is not surprising that his keyboard music contained such elements. The above extract of BWV 575 undoubtedly illustrates a similarly inspired subject, and for this reason, the nature of either subject cannot be seen as a compositional weakness. It is not contrapuntally complex as indeed the earlier works were inclined less towards contrapuntal density.

The first episode also contains an inner melodic reference which can be found in the movement *Gute Nacht o Wesen* from the Bach motet *Jesu Meine freude* BWV 227. The Tenor has an identical melodic pattern.

Illustration No.37 – BWV 227 – *Gute Nacht o Wesen* – bb.12 – 17.

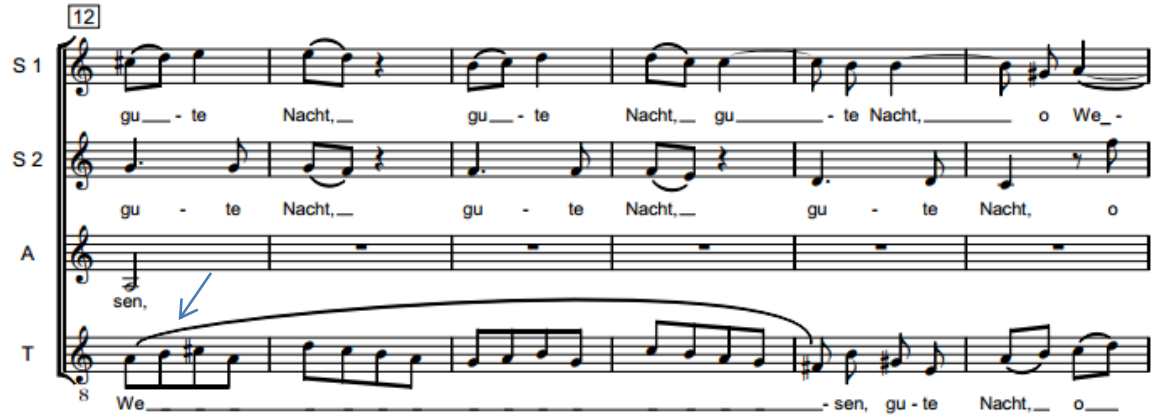
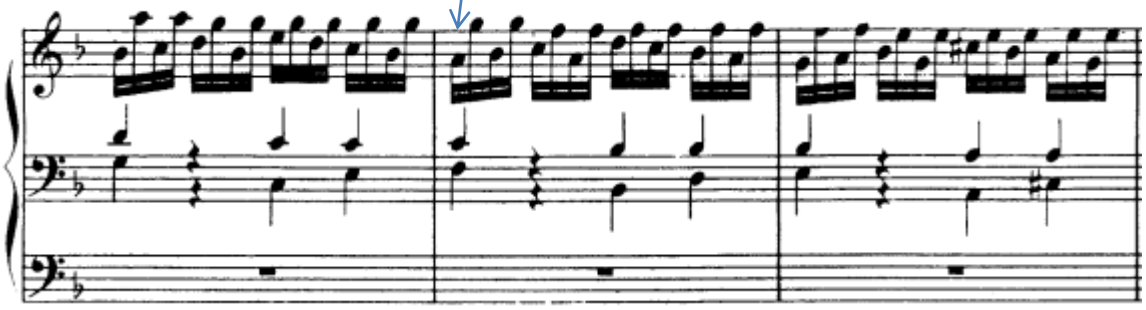
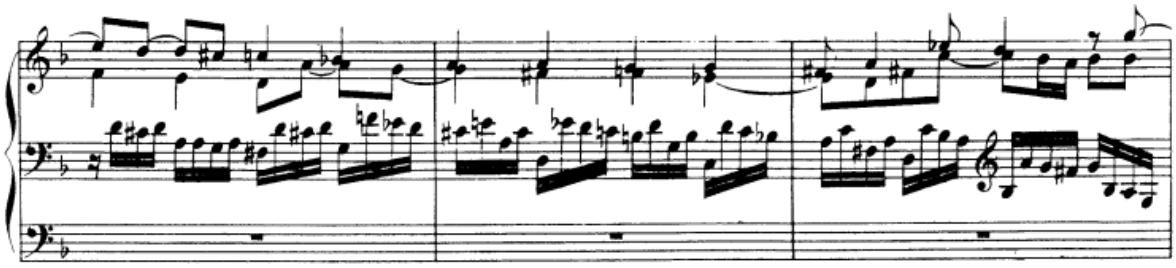


Illustration No.38 – BWV 565 (ii) – bb.42 – 44.



It seems unlikely that another composer would borrow exactly the same melodic idea, and a very expressive one too. For all the criticism of 'weak counterpoint' there are, nonetheless, passages which do show considerable sophistication and fine contrapuntal craftsmanship that are certainly worthy of Bach. Moreover, the careful attention paid to the voice leading is again another trait of Bach's. The illustration overleaf surely provides sufficient evidence.

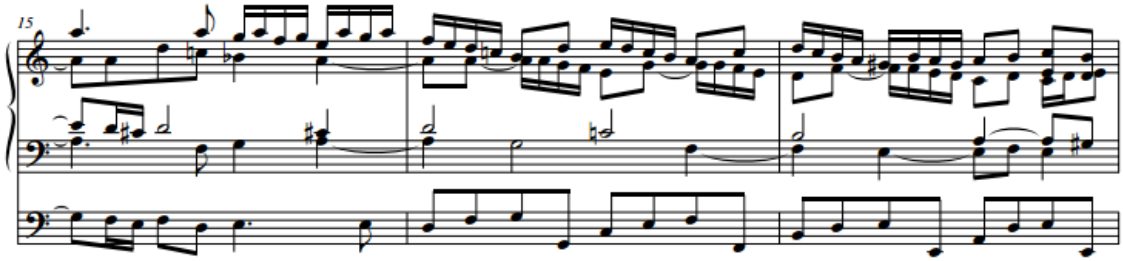
Illustration No.39 – BWV 565 (ii) – bb.49 – 51.



The above extract albeit only three bars exhibits two fundamental compositional traits that Bach was renowned to have possessed in his early years. Firstly, there is clear evidence of sequence and the use of the cycle of 5ths: the influence of the Corelli trio sonatas is evident. Secondly, the harmony is much richer and much more nimbly executed than many of Bach's contemporaries. His ability to weave through the suggested sequential harmonies so quickly is considerably more effective than the following examples, each taken from a *possible* composer of BWV 565 (ii).

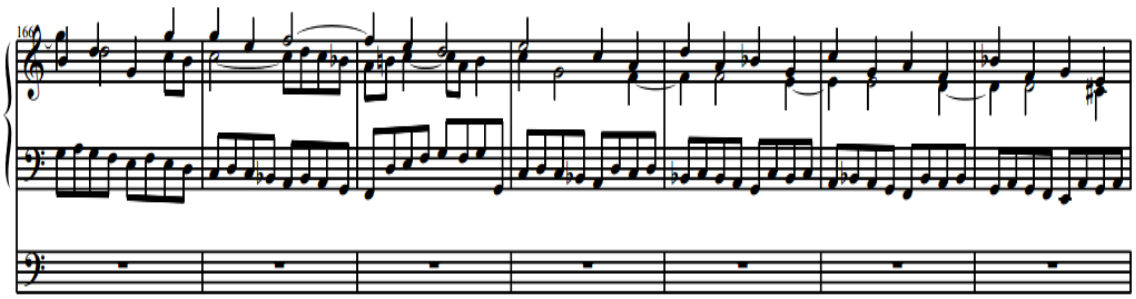
1. Kellner – Fugue in D Minor - This is of course a satisfactory progression but it lacks dramatic integrity and is somewhat perfunctory.

Illustration No. 40 – (Prelude and) Fugue in D Minor – P.Kellner – bb.15 – 17.



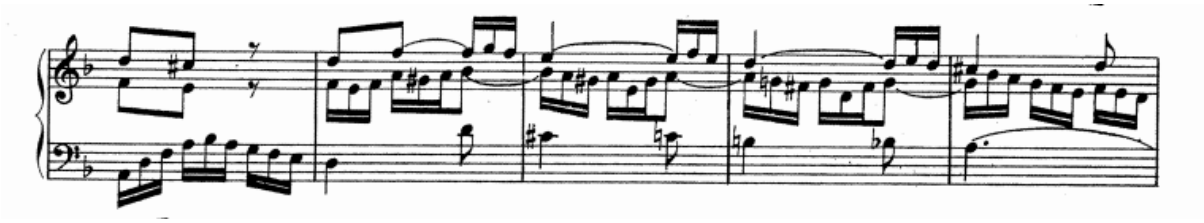
2. Krebs – Fugue in A Minor – Again, it is not harmonically that complex or indeed exciting. There is a sense of merely spinning out the sequential material.

Illustration No. 41 – (Toccata and) Fugue in A Minor – J.L. Krebs – bb. 166 – 172.



3. W.F. Bach – Fugue in D Minor – There is little in the way of originality, it is just sequential. The implied harmonies are of more interest, but again it is not overly effective and there is the sense of merely diverting attention before the subject is reinstated.

Illustration No.42 – Fugue in D Minor – W.F. Bach – bb.18 – 22.



With Bach, the episodic material is much more integral to the design of the fugue, and is not there merely for the sake of contrast. With the above three examples, they all work sufficiently well as episodes but lack the craftsmanship and particularly the intricacy of Bach.

David Humphreys is utterly convinced that the work is not authentic and that Kellner is very much likely to be the prime contender: 'The thin textured, prolix writing within a narrow tonal compass is one of Kellner's hallmarks, and is of course a persistent feature of the fugue in BWV 565'.[38] For all the arguments in favour of Kellner, or the other contenders, none of their organ works really exhibits much in the way of a strong melodic gift. How does one prove such a gift? Bach certainly knew the importance of strong melodic control, and above all its perception by the human ear and mind. It is the overall question of satisfaction, and indeed also whether it is memorable; that is the essence of a work by Bach and this is true of BWV 565 (ii).

Concerning the manuscript itself, specific attention has been paid to the notational style which conforms to that of the early 18th Century. Correspondence with one of the leading practitioners in manuscript authenticity further points to the work as conforming to an early work by Bach:

> Ringk's copy (D-B, Mus. ms. Bach P 595, Faszikel 8) uses a modal key signature and 3-shaped flags on semiquavers (sixteenth-notes), notational conventions that had petered out by the middle of the eighteenth century. On this ground, Yoshitake Kobayashi remarked somewhere (which I can't recall at the moment) that Ringk's copy reliably transmits the notational (as well as musical) details of its model that was written in the first two decades of the eighteenth century. I tend to agree with him.[39]

[38] Humphreys, David, 'The D minor Toccata BWV 565' in *Early Music Vol. 10, No. 2* (April, 1982), Oxford University Press, p.216

[39] Tomita, Yo, (Prof.) of Queen's University Belfast – direct written correspondence in January 2015

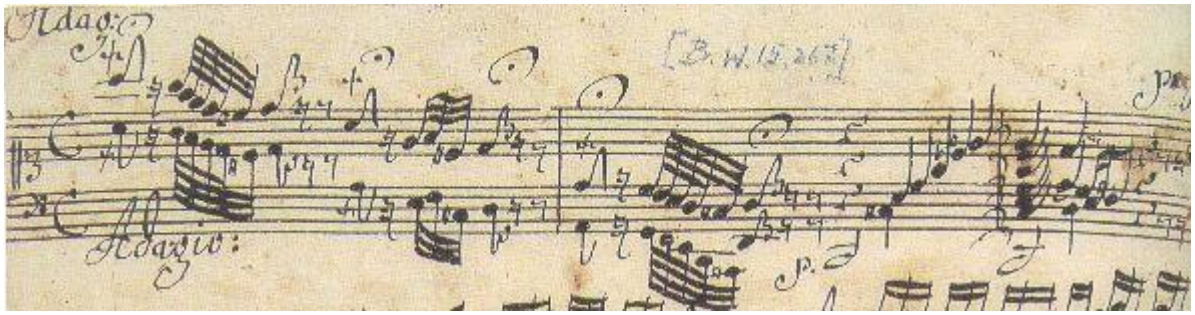
Moreover, BWV 565 (ii) is not the only work by Bach which uses a modal signature. This is an often underestimated (and now almost forgotten) link between several of the organ works – most editions have now replaced these key signatures with the mandatory accidentals. One of the few editions which provides a much closer transcription of the *Neue Bach-Ausgabe* is Bärenreiter.

'The compositions are all presented here with the key signatures found in the original sources: thus, unlike earlier editions (e.g., Peters and the old *Bach-Ausgabe*), the Prelude and Fugue in F (minor), BWV 534, with but three flats, the G-minor fugue, BWV 542, with but one.'[40] Two further examples include the G Minor fugue, BWV 578 and the C Minor fugue (Legrenzi), BWV 574.

When Bach left Weimar in 1717, no longer was he the court organist but rather a chamber musician absorbing a wide variety of different cultures and musical genres. The modal key signatures would have fallen rapidly out of favour, and certainly the Well-tempered Clavier publication in 1722 shows Bach's perception of all the keys which could be utilised through equal temperament. Thus, the three mentioned contenders are considerably outcast purely on this evidence: they were all less than twelve years of age from when this manuscript dates, and are highly unlikely to have written such a work.

Illustration No.43 – The oldest copy of BWV 565 (i) originally belonging to the copyist J. Ringk.

(Berlin State Library, D-B Mus. ms. Bach P595. Fascicle 8 (pp.57-64)



[40] Kilian, Dietrich, *Preface to Vol. 5 of the organ works by J.S. Bach*, BA 5028-01, Series IV, 5. (Kassel, Bärenreiter, 1979) p.ix

> The model seems to be that composers are born as individual geniuses but that their artistry can take a while to manifest itself. When it does, even pieces that show weaknesses because of youthful inexperience are still marked by the composer's individual stamp, and *careful* studies of these youthful attempts should reveal fore-shadowings of the mature style of later masterworks.[41]

The genius of Bach had to be honed and refined and my argument is that this work does indeed demonstrate fore-shadowings of the subsequently more refined and eloquent works. Other factors will now be analysed with regards to Bach's changing approach to fugal composition but at the same time, these will also serve to prove that the work can be seen as authentic. Above all, hallmarks can be seen which point to blooming techniques which can be seen to greater extent as processes in the later master works. Bach had a remarkable gift to yield so much out of relatively little, but nonetheless strong, thematic material. A lot of the episodic fragments and bridge passages are carefully constructed and are often derived from the original subject. Something which many commentators forget is that all the Preludes and Fugues (not just the organ works but also the '48', or indeed a lot of the fugal writing present within the two - part and three - part inventions) vary enormously in style. Certainly, the counterpoint is not as dense as some of the works, but then again Bach was not likely to have been aiming to write densely wrought counterpoint all the time. With Bach, there is often a *janus* personality: sometimes looking forwards, sometimes looking backwards, and rarely does he settle on any particular genre.

BWV 565 (ii) clearly demonstrates the notion of modulation within fugue and subject entries in related majors and minors are also prevalent within the texture. Despite this, the use of recurring countersubjects is not a feature.

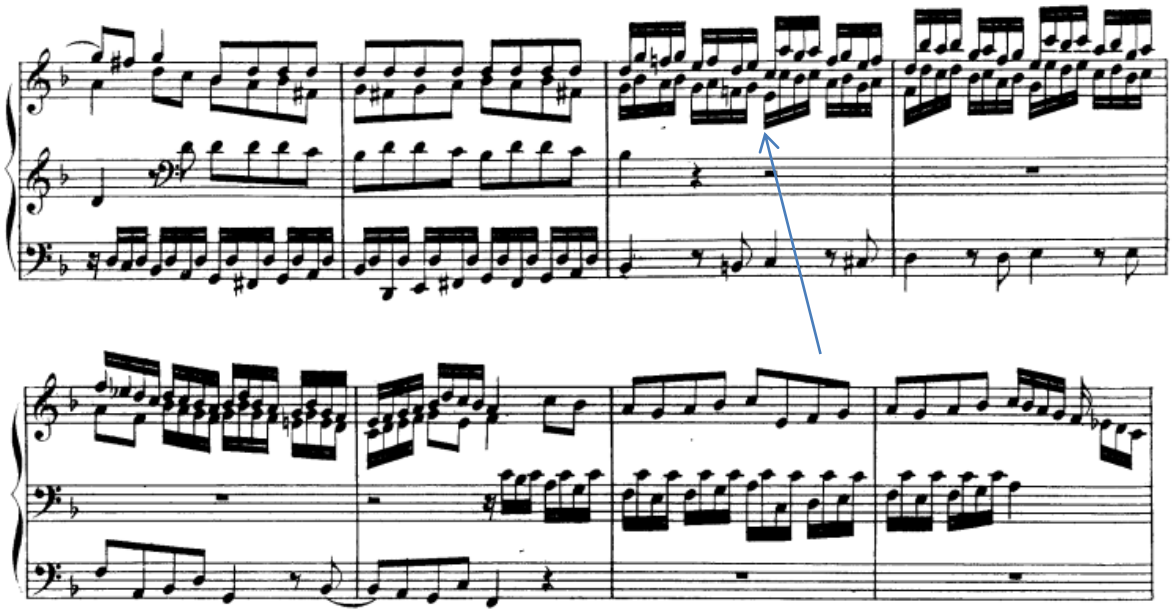
Table No.6 – the subject entries located within BWV 565 (ii).

Measure	Device	Voice
30	S	Tenor
32	S + 4	Alto
39	S + 8	Soprano
52	S – 12 *(per arsin et thesin)*	Bass (Pedal)
57	S - 6	Tenor
70	S + 8	Soprano
86	S - 9	Bass (Pedal)
88	S - 2	Alto
93	S – 5 (*per arsin et thesin*)	Tenor
105	S	Alto
109	S - 8	Bass (Pedal)
124	S (*per arsin et thesin*)	Tenor

[41] Melamed, Daniel, *Hearing Bach's Passions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) p.112

The idea of thematic concentration - the ability of taking a thematic kernel and then developing it - is clearly evident in this fugue too. The same compositional thought processes highlighted in BWV 579 (contemporaneous with this fugue) are without doubt present. Of course, BWV 565 is presented in an entirely different generic format - this fugue bears no *stylistic generic* resemblance to either BWV 531 or BWV 579 – its stylistic and generic identity is therefore quite different to these works. The following extracts all demonstrate the notion of crafting episodic material from the subject.

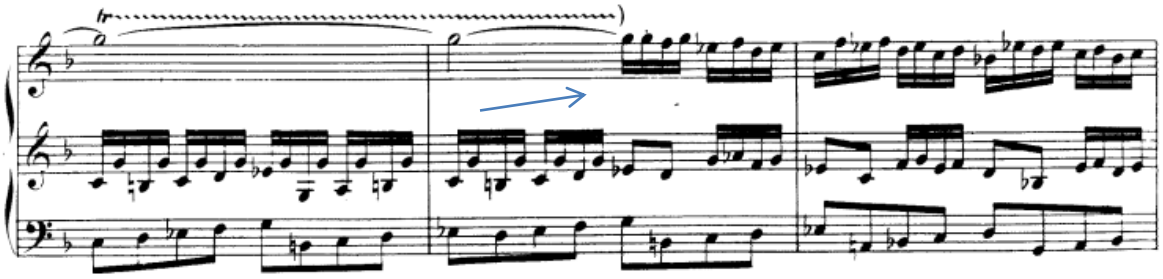
Illustration No.44 – BWV 565(ii) – bb.52 – 59.



The opening of the episodic material is very clearly derived from the melodic shape of the subject. Whilst it is of course sequential, it is not conveyed as mechanically structured and there is an underlying dramatic plan: a rising bass line anticipating F Major before cascading in thirds to a definitive cadence into F Major (relative major).

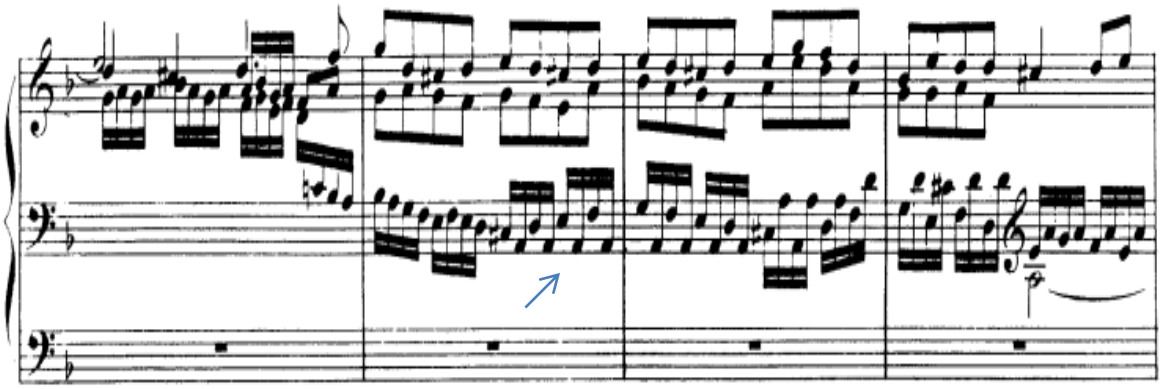
Three further examples showing this process at work occur at b.90, 103 and 104:

Illustration No.45 – BWV 565 (ii) – bb.88 – 91.



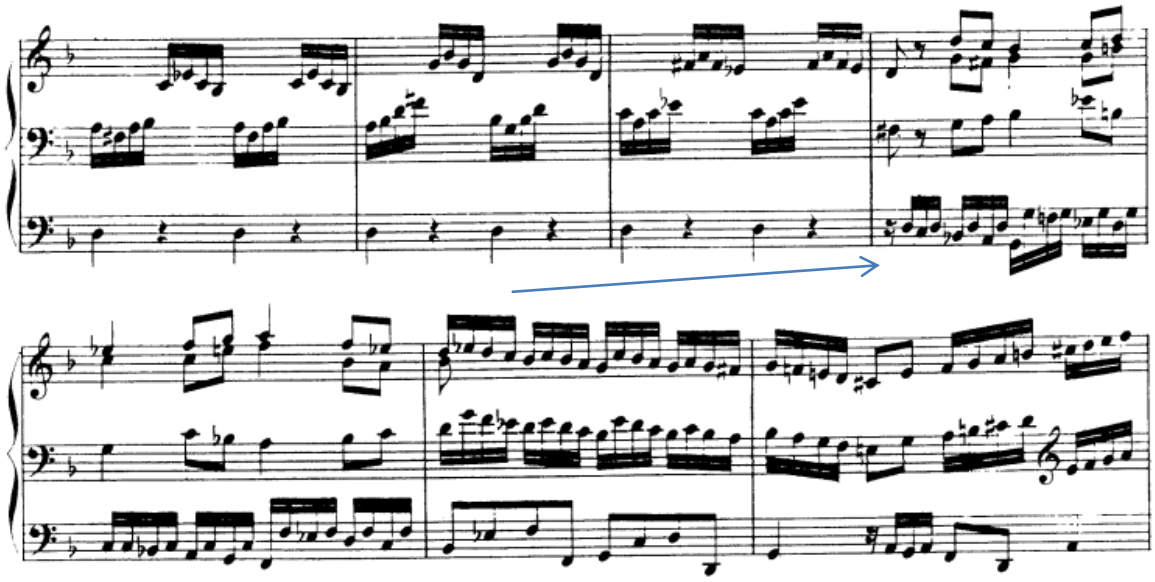
For the extract beneath, a fragment of the bass line during an episode bears a close resemblance to a melodically inverted subject (2nd becomes a 7th etc.).

Illustration No.46 – BWV 565 (ii) – bb.102 – 105.



For the following extract overleaf, the pedal line clearly takes the subject in an extracted form descending through the cycle of 5ths. There is a strong sense of continuity and it is proved in yet another instance that there is a strong emphasis with regards to the episodes being truly passages of thematic contrapuntal development, as so evident in Bach. It is only on closer inspection that one can find Bach's thought process of creating so much out of relatively little thematic material.

Illustration No.47 – BWV 565 (ii) – bb.117 – 123.



An often overlooked issue with regards to this fugue is how Bach uses the qualities of the organ to assist with the overall projection. Undoubtedly, this fugue is not the richest harmonically and/or the most contrapuntally profound, but it is nonetheless a masterpiece of dramatic integrity. Christoph Wolff has often suggested that aspects such as parallel octaves (for the Toccata) have been attributed to Bach in overcoming the physical limitations of the organ at Arnstadt. This is questionable because the fugal style which Bach is inspired by is ultimately through the means of concerto form – a structural form that he would not have been well acquainted with until at least after his visit to Buxtehude, and more importantly, after his immersion with the orchestra at Weimar who often played works by Vivaldi. The work could well have been composed at Mülhausen where there was a more substantial organ where the effect of thicker textures would have been much more effective rather than merely 'patching' for an inadequate instrument. Where else in his music does Bach write for an instrument with limitations and is therefore compositionally handicapped?

Subsequently, it is arguable that the work can be regarded as being composed during his time at Weimar. The organ which Bach had at his disposal in Weimar (1708-1717) could easily be utilised as an organ capable of conveying the different textures found within *concerti grossi* and the important effect of antiphony. Beneath is the 1737 specification of the organ: it is not precisely the organ Bach used due to substantial maintenance and rebuilds since Bach left Weimar, but the fundamental design is nonetheless present:

Bach had two organs at his disposal in Weimar, since in addition to the court organ he also used that of his kinsman J.G. Walther in the Stadtkirche. This was a two manual organ built by Christoph Junge in 1685. Bach's own instrument was in the ducal chapel (the Himmelsburg), situated just beneath the ceiling and high above the altar, as if in heaven itself. The original instrument was built by Ludwig Compenius in 1657-58: a two manual organ with thirty – eight stops. It was extensively rebuilt by Johan Conrad Weishaupt in 1707-08, shortly before Bach's arrival, and further substantial repairs and modifications were made by H.N. Trebs in 1712-14. A Glockenspiel stop was added (or perhaps renewed) in 1716, and Trebs did further work on the organ in 1719-20, after Bach had left Weimar. It is uncertain, therefore, how accurately the following specification, dating from 1737, represents the instrument that Bach played, but it probably gives some idea of it. [42]

Illustration No.48 – The 1737 Specification of the Weimar *Himmelsburg* Organ.

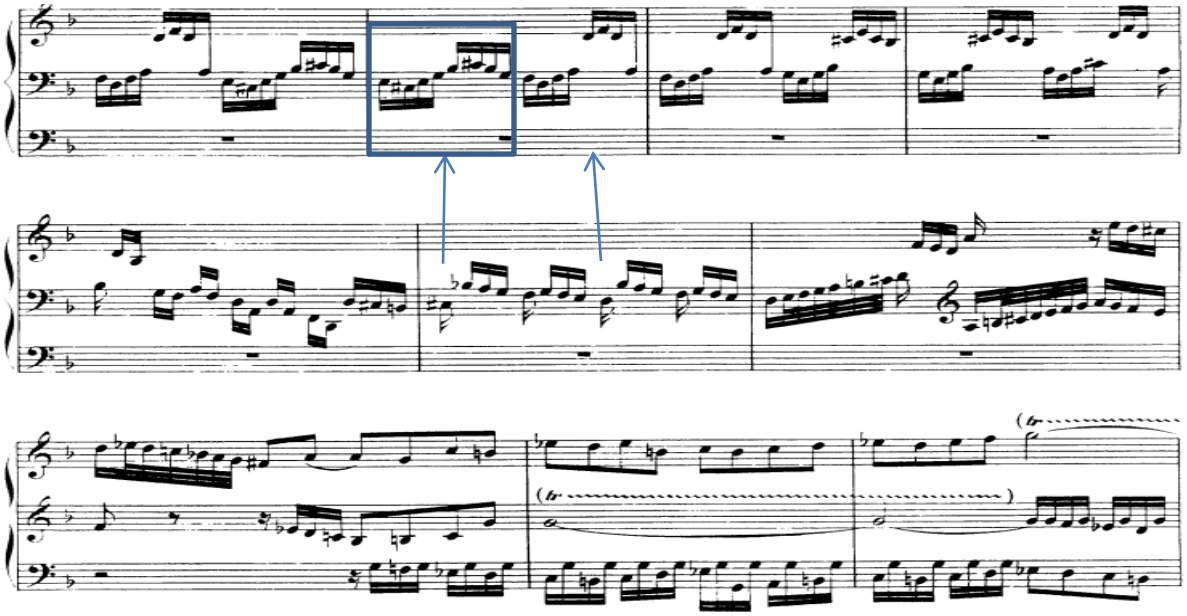
Oberwerk (upper manual)		*Brustwerk* (lower manual)	
1. Principal	8ft	1. Principal	8ft
2. Quintaton	16ft	2. Viol da gamba	8ft
3. Gemshorn	8ft	3. Gedackt	8ft
4. Gedackt	8ft	4. Trompette	8ft
5. Quintaton	4ft	5. Kleingedackt	4ft
6. Octave	4ft	6. Octave	4ft
7. Mixture	6 ranks	7. Waldflöte	2ft
8. Cymbel	3 ranks	8. Sesquialtera	
9. Glockenspiel			
Pedal			
1. Gross Untersatz	32ft	5. Principal	8ft
2. Sub-Bass	16ft	6. Trompette	8ft
3. Posaune	16ft	7. Cornett	4ft
4. Violon	16ft		

Also Tremulant, Cymbelstern, and couplers

Whereas changes in manuals are not required (let alone indicated) in the previous two fugues, in this fugue there is certainly an expectation, albeit *not* indicated: Bach rarely provided registrations for his organ works and to this day it remains a matter of uncertainty.

[42] Boyd, Malcolm, *Master Musicians – Bach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) p .44

Illustration No.49 – BWV 565 (ii) – bb.75 – 84.



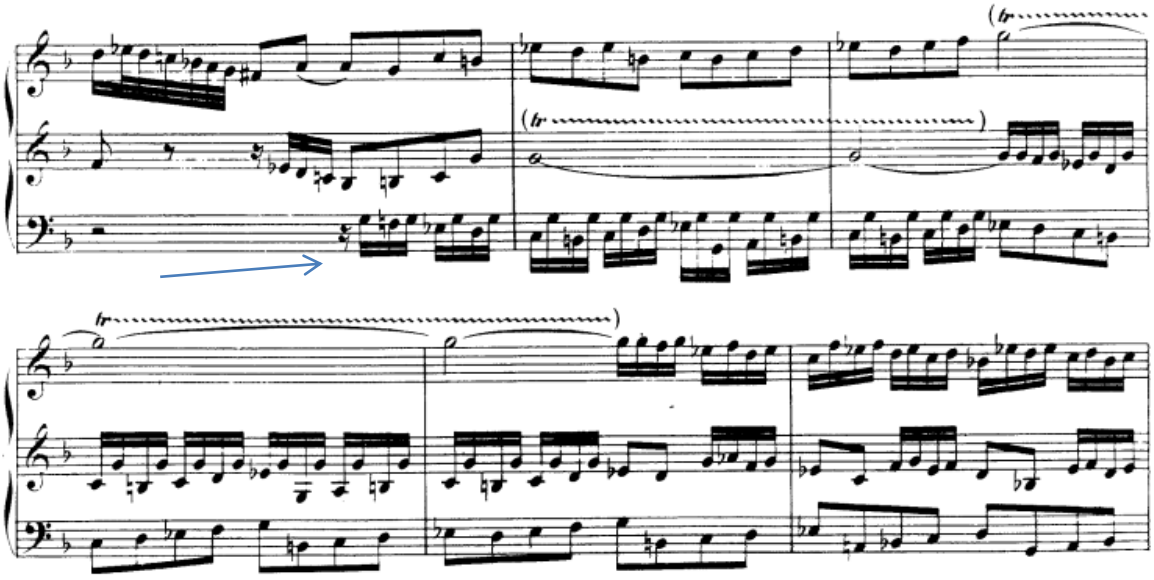
The textural differences (sparse broken chords for episodic passages by comparison with the more thickly textured subject entries) are considerable and it does seem apparent that Bach is trying to convey a sense of antiphony. The flourishes of D Minor of course signal for the return of the *ripieno*. This undoubtedly achieves the desired effect of *concertino/ripieno* variation. In addition, it is possible to see the *concertino* passages as further subdivisions: the repetition of the same chords can easily be heard as passages for antiphony between solo instruments e.g. flute and violin. Indeed, many of Bach's *concerti* were scored for flute and strings, so such an idea is plausible if it were to be scored for such a contemporaneous orchestra. Moreover, a relatively early work such as this fugue very much enables the analyst to gaze on the same mind at work which would bring to fruition many concerti with an Italian foothold. The Brandenburg Concerti (BWV 1046 – 1051) all bear considerable resemblance to the Italian *Concerto Grosso* model, and the hallmarks can already be seen in this fugue.

> There was a further major genre evolving whose shape is not totally unlike the fully-fledged Vivaldi *ritornello*: the long fugue in which the subject returns for middle entries. One can see the young Bach – like the young George Friedrich Handel, interested in sustained length even in normally succinct genres like the allemande – developing longer fugues in a variety of pieces before 1713 and creating a shape that would have its own future development. [43]

[43] Williams, Peter**, '**Some thoughts on Italian elements in certain music of Johann Sebastian Bach' *Recercare*, 11 (1999), pp.185-200, at p.187.

The question of invertible *textures* is a pertinent issue. Bach displays with relative ease the various textural permutations, although the contrapuntal demands are by no means that complex as the texture is predominantly governed by three voices. The very nature of the subject is not one that demands or indeed allows a great deal of opportunities for complex contrapuntal treatment. For all the criticism about the lack of tonal exploration with regards to passing through related keys, curiously this is not a criticism of the previous two fugues, whose tonal compass in both cases is a lot more confined. As it happens, BWV 565(ii) is *more* explorative and this argument is somewhat flawed as a consequence. There are subject entries in the tonic, subdominant (b.52), relative major (b.57), and also the dominant minor of the relative major (C Minor) (b.86). As such, one can begin to see a substantial change in Bach's approach to fugal composition – the tonal destinations are beginning to become more diverse. Moreover, the length of the fugue is considerably longer which is not surprising due to the much longer and more developed episodes, but also subject statements (and often successive in the same key area – see below) are becoming more tonally diverse:

Illustration No.50 – BWV 565 (ii) – bb.86 – 91.



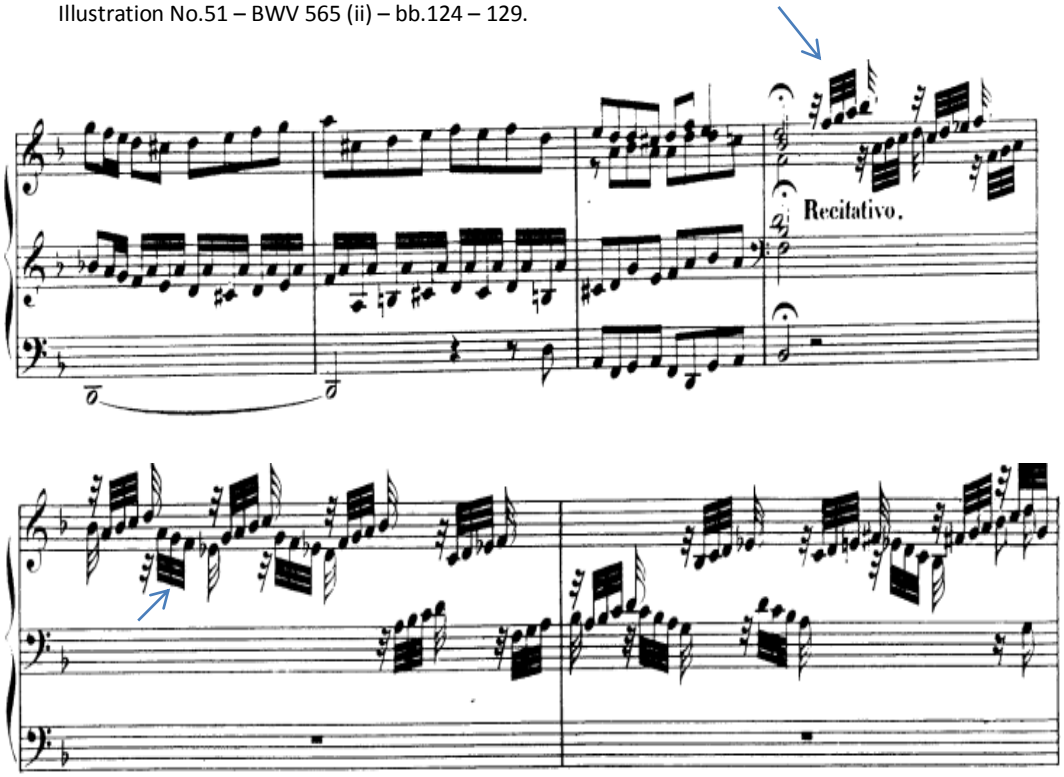
Subsequently, whilst this fugue conforms to neither the *style* of BWV 531 (ii) or BWV 579, there are elements taken from each. The lucid and rapidly flowing keyboard writing in the manuals is coupled with *concerto grosso* form. The counterpoint is often not particularly complex (often thirds and sixths) and is predominantly a three part texture throughout. As such, it is a unique generic work, but indeed so are virtually all the organ works by Bach. No two are identical in compositional style.

One aspect rarely discussed is that of the cadenza. Unlike Kellner's cadenzas which are relatively short and lacking an inner motivic structure, the cadenzas by Bach in his early fugues are more prolific, not only in terms of length but also their demand on the player and indeed the subsequent

effect on the listener. More importantly, the same idea of compositional concentration can be seen. Arguably, this cadenza has three distinct ideas:

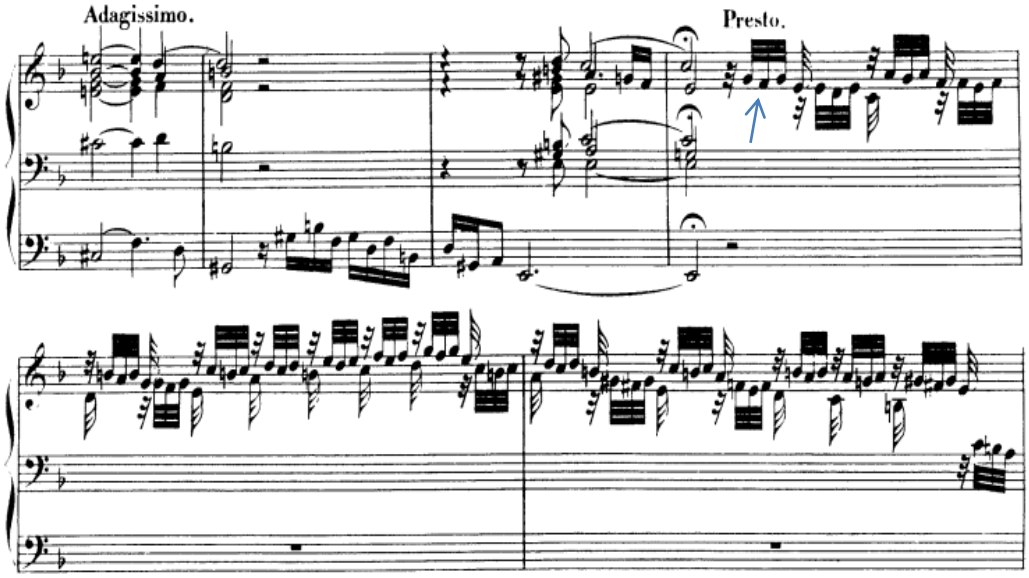
1. A conjunct rising four note motif and its inversion:

Illustration No.51 – BWV 565 (ii) – bb.124 – 129.



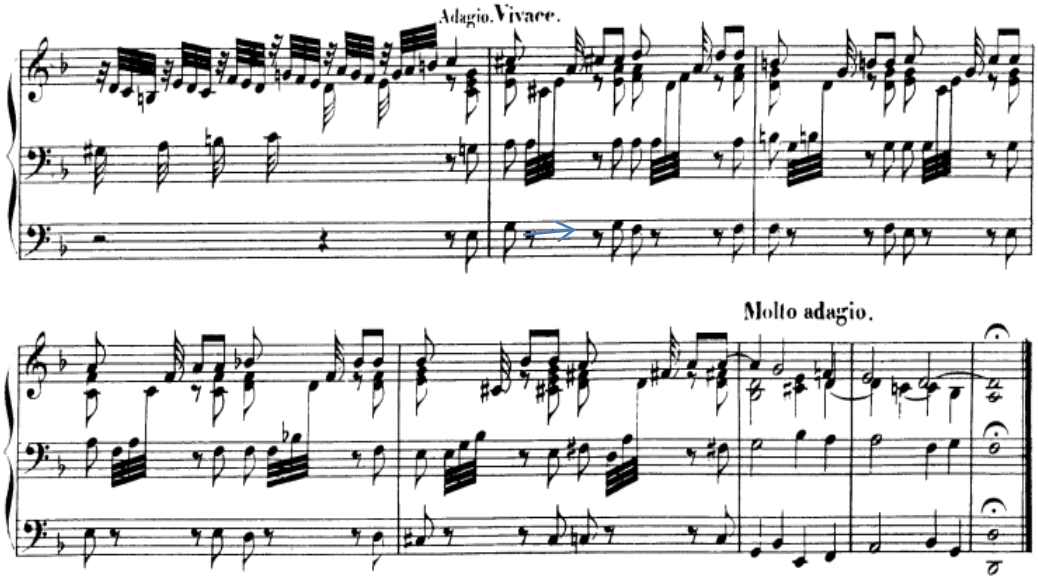
2. The opening fragment of the subject:

Illustration No.52 – BWV 565 (ii) – bb.130 – 135.



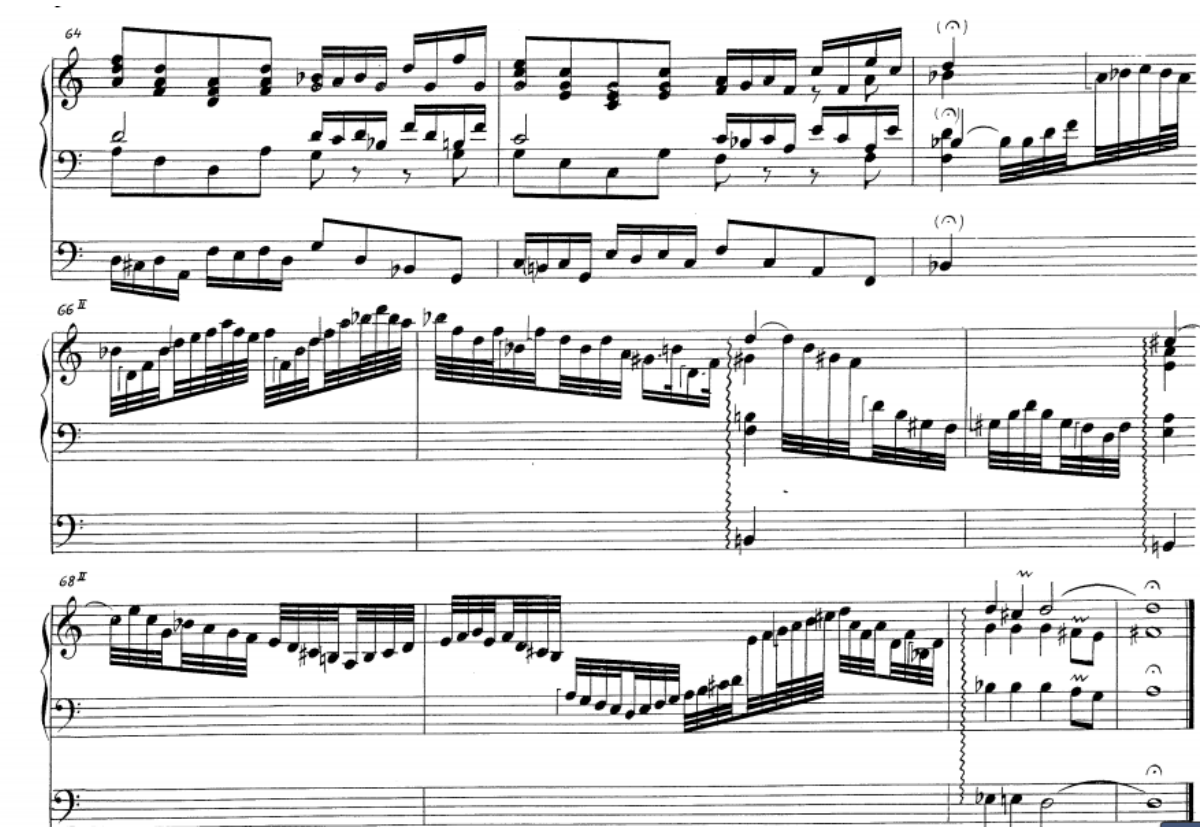
3. The sequence of broken chords / chords using a downward progression through the cycle of 5ths (*Vivace*).

Illustration No.53 – BWV 565 (ii) – bb.136 – 143.



Beneath is the cadenza from Kellner's Prelude in D Minor: it is considerably shorter and far less developed from a structural perspective.

Illustration No.54 – Prelude in D Minor – P.Kellner – bb.64 – 71.



The cadenzas of Bach's early organ works (BWV 531, 532, 574, 575) had one real purpose and that was to display technical command. Nonetheless, they were not merely compiled as a series of melodic flourishes: one can see that whilst they are almost improvisatory in nature, they are carefully worked out.

The concept of BWV 565 being a transcription of a solo violin or cello work is not without precedent. Peter Williams (1981) as well as Mark Argent (2005) have provided considerable plausible evidence. However, many of the devices such as the thickly textured chords (especially in the toccata) as well as the rapidly oscillating semiquavers in the fugue would have presented a considerable technical challenge, although by no means impractical. Thus, it is possible that Eric Lewin Altshuler's suggestion that the Lute is the more likely contender is more plausible:

> Bariolage (the alternating of fast-moving notes with an equally fast but fixed note) is idiomatic to the lute and Bach's use of the technique already hints at a possible lute origin for BWV 565. Indeed BWV 565 is so replete with lute techniques deployed in a strikingly effective manner as to greatly reinforce the notion that it may indeed have been conceived as a lute piece.[44]

For all the doubts and quibbles with this work, no one has ever fully asserted that the work is inauthentic nor provided sufficient evidence to qualify it as such. It is arguable that the evidence is overwhelmingly in Bach's favour, as there are so many of his personal compositional traits to be found within the music, which are not only concurrent with other works but also provide a rehearsal for many of the techniques which would follow in his later works (not just for the organ). Thus, BWV 565 (ii) can almost certainly be seen as one of Bach's last early works for organ. The fugues which follow begin to show a considerable change in compositional approach.

[44] Altschuler, Eric. Lewin, 'Were Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D Minor BWV 565 and Ciaccona from BWV 1004 Lute Pieces?' in *The Musical Times Vol. 146, No. 1893* (Winter, 2005), p.77

CHAPTER 4

Fugue in A Major - BWV 536(ii) – Increasing Contrapuntal Complexity

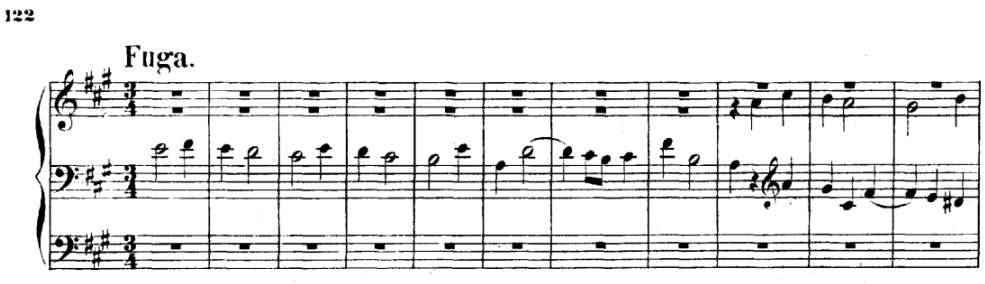
The gentle and relatively unassuming subject of this fugue has led to so many commentators underestimating the contrapuntal devices at work throughout the piece. David Humphreys is adamant that the work is not by Bach:

> A wooden, pedestrian piece of work composed in a faceless idiom which could on internal evidence be attributed to any one of a dozen minor organist – composers active during or slightly after Bach's lifetime.[45]

Certainly, the so-called 'Eight little preludes and fugues' are possibly not by the hand of Bach as there are at times some idiomatic obscurities compared to Bach's more tightly wrought contrapuntal command. That said, to this day, their author too has still yet to be proven and it is of course possible that they are by Bach. However, no one can define Bach's style, as no two works share the same structure or resemble one another directly. Certainly, other capable composers' works (Kellner, Krebs etc.) are not unsatisfactory, but they do not penetrate nearly so much upon the intellect. The question of manuscript evidence is always an issue, as virtually all of Bach's works are copies. Thus, it is always the compositional evidence which one must examine, the evidence which is too frequently overlooked.

Bar lines are without doubt sometimes misleading in terms of their ability to help see the music for what it really portrays. The divisive two, three, four or however many beats in the bar, is merely a framework. This fugue in particular alternates extensively as to how the rhythmic metre varies and indeed questions the very nature of the time signature.

Illustration No.55 – BWV 536 (ii) – bb.1 – 11.



[45] Humphreys, David, 'A Bach polyglot: the A major Prelude & Fugue BWV 536', in *OY* 20 (1989), pp. 72-87 at p.78

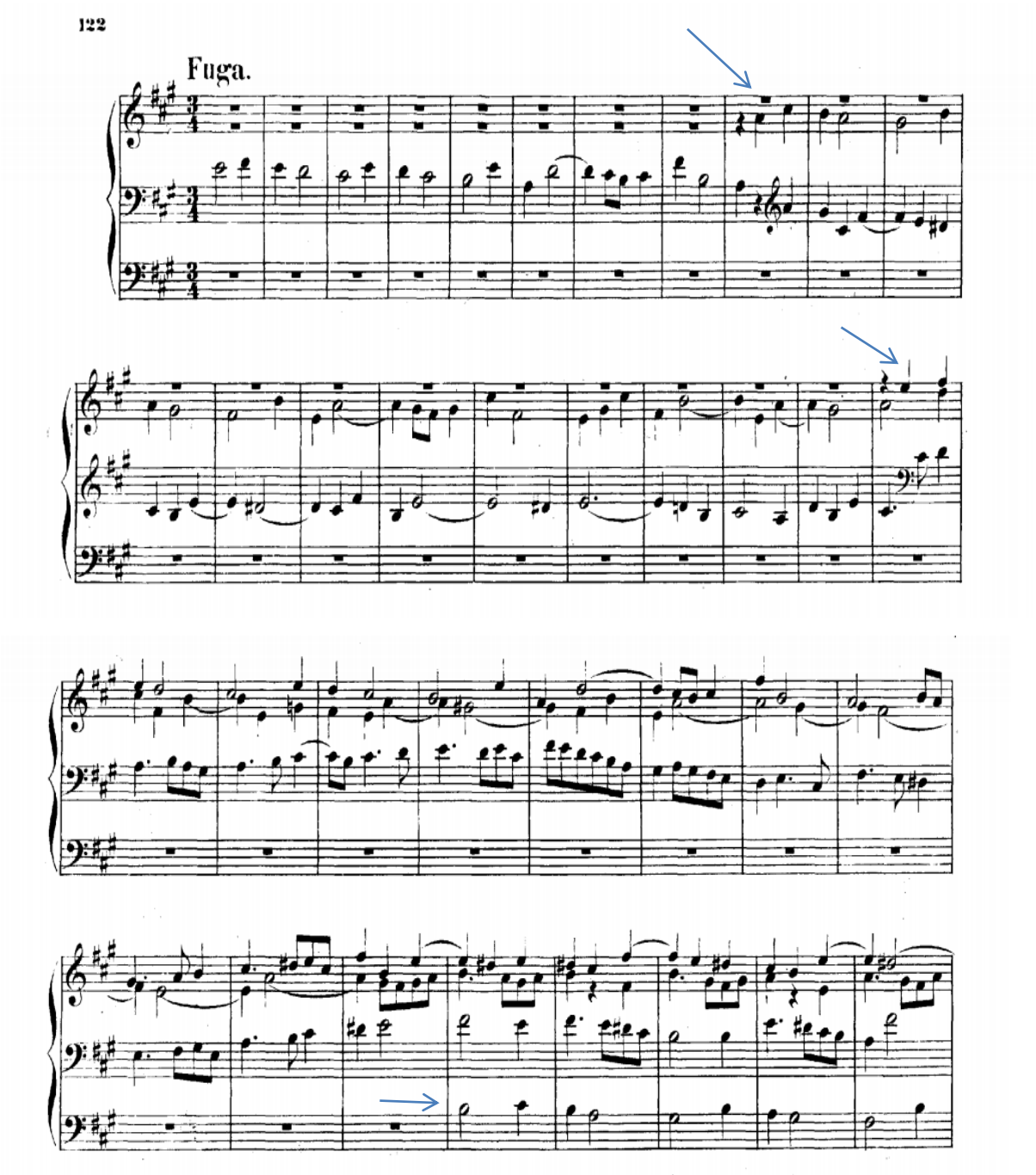
Whilst the time signature is that of 3/4, this is misleading as to how one should interpret and understand the framework of the subject. Taking the first eight bars, four different options are possible as to where the stresses lie:

1. Instead of a 3/4 time signature, a rearrangement into 3/2 helps to project the shape a lot more clearly and it is easier to see the phrases.
2. Envisage the subject as based on *hemiolas.*
3. The subject could easily be rearranged into a time signature of 4/4.
4. It could be transformed into a lively dance in the style of the minuet thus 3/8 could be more suitable. Indeed, the early manuscript of BWV 536 (a) *Bärenreiter Urtext Vol. 6* is with the notation of 3/8.

Put simply, 3/4 cannot be taken as the defining time signature as like so many subjects in triple time, this subject is clearly susceptible to the use of hemiola, cross-rhythm, retardation and also hocketing quavers and Bach makes full use of these techniques. The most important aspect is that with these aforementioned features, they permit Bach far greater rhythmic flexibility but also allow for a more inventive and characterful portrayal of what is potentially quite a dull subject.

Perhaps the most unanswered question is therefore at what tempo this fugue, or indeed all of Bach's fugues, should be taken? Virtually no tempo directions are given for any of the works except for the occasional example such as *Alla breve e staccato* for BWV 550 (ii) but this instruction is spurious in itself particularly from the aspect of articulation. The answer can simply be found in a natural pulse e.g. that of a clock or a walking pace. Virtually all of Bach's organ works (and no doubt many other instrumental and choral works) conform to a natural pulse. Certainly, permutations of the second as a unit of time, e.g. Crotchet = 120 per minute or Dotted Crotchet = 60 per minute, and indeed similar forms, all hold sway. Of course, the average human heart pulse should be in the region of 50 – 70 pulses a minute: it is possible that the origins of the tempi for practically all of Bach's works can be traced to this essentially natural pulse. Concerning the exposition of BWV 536 (ii), it is one that some fugal technicians would describe as breaking the 'rules' as to how a subject should be answered.

Illustration No. 56 – BWV 536 (ii) – bb.1 – 37.



The first notable feature is that of the answer form in b.9. The tonal alteration is as one would expect, but starting on the second beat rather than the first already begins the rhythmic ambiguity. Secondly, whereas one would expect the third entry to be that of the principal subject in its original guise, it instead takes the rhythmic style of the answer form by beginning on the 2nd beat at b.21. Furthermore, in a similar way, the pre-supposed second answer form in the pedal actually takes the rhythmic form of the principal subject i.e. beginning with a minim (b.33). What is perhaps even more curious is that the exposition modulates (albeit passing) to the secondary dominant – B Major. It is

possible to see a chiastic design with the forms that these entries take: ABBA. Grammatically, some would say these fugal entries are slightly curious. Certainly it is unusual, but it is likely that Bach deliberately intended there to be a heightened sense of harmonic tension with the long awaited pedal entry after 32 bars. A common trend which emerges from several commentators such as David Humphreys is that this fugue has more in common with the genre of a passacaglia. Certainly, the subject entries are very frequent and there are barely any extended passages without reference to the subject. No other fugue, at least in this survey, bears a remotely similar initial structure complete with what might seem technical anomalies. Peter Williams justifiably concurs with both Humphreys' critical opinion and the much more enlightening opinion held by Bach's first biographer, Philip Spitta:

> This is an original fugal conception, with a smooth, effortless counterpoint treating the subject almost as an ostinato, an impression heightened by the fugue's rhythm and persistent eight bar phrase. Although the work's invention has been called 'minimal', merely fourteen variations on a subject, many players agree with Spitta in hearing a 'wonderful intensity' in the sustained three and four part counterpoint.[46]

Beneath is a table locating all the subject entries. This fugue has arguably two countersubjects though their use is somewhat sporadic. Thus, they have not been included within the table. The notion of *per arsin et thesin* also becomes considerably less transparent with the more complex and densely wrought fugues. Thus, for the fugal analyses hereafter, only very prominent examples have been highlighted in the tables.

Table No.7- The subject entries located in BWV 536 (ii).

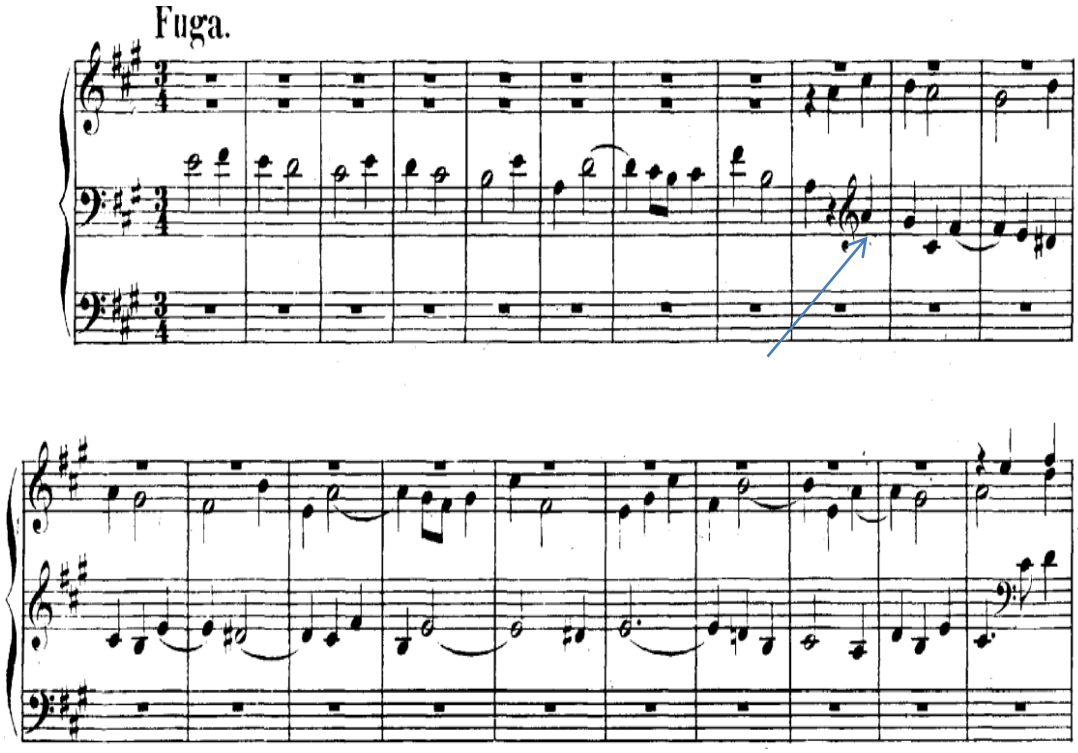
Measure	Device	Voice
1	S	Tenor
9	S + 4 (Tonal answer)	Alto
21	S + 8	Soprano
33	S - 4	Bass (Pedal)
45	S – 8 (Fragment)	Bass (Pedal)
47	S + 8 (Fragment)	Soprano
49	S - 5	Tenor
57	S	Alto
65	S + 8	Soprano
67	S (Fragment)	Alto
69	S + 4	Soprano
77	S - 8	Bass (Pedal)
89	S - 3	Tenor
102	S + 2	Alto
115	S + 11	Soprano

[46]Williams, Peter, *The Organ Works of J.S. Bach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) p.58

117	S + 8 (*) from F Sharp (Fragment)	Alto
123	S (*) from F Sharp	Tenor
136	S + 5	Soprano
137	S – 8 (*) from F Sharp	Bass (Pedal)
145	S + 8	Soprano
161	S - 8	Bass (Pedal)

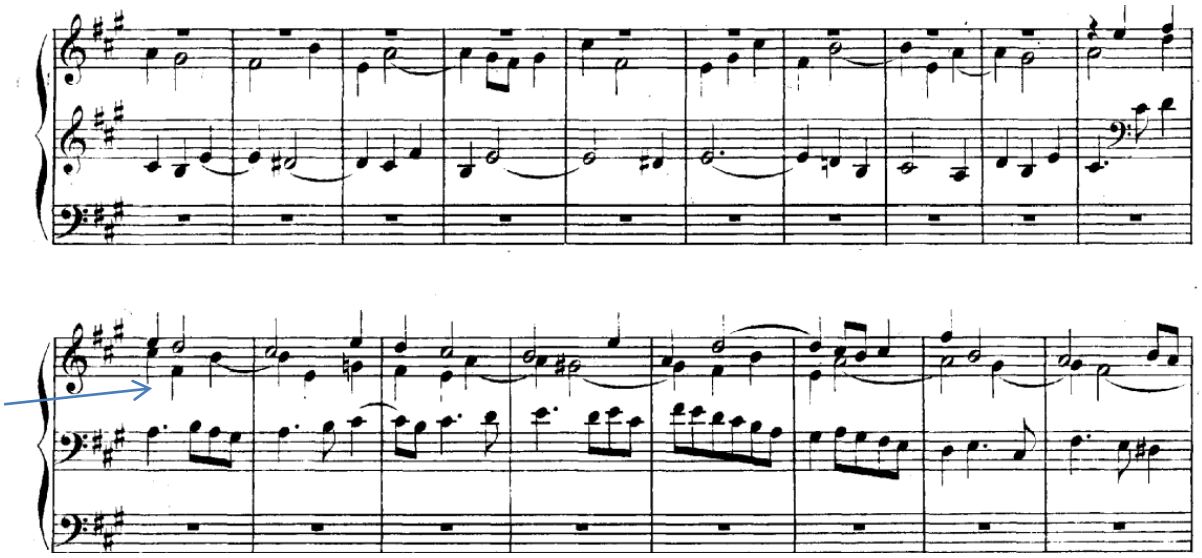
As the table indicates, in a manner not dissimilar to BWV 565 (ii), the tonal destinations e.g. to the relative minor are becoming more expansive. Nonetheless, no analyst until now has really discussed Bach's handling of countersubjects or indeed implied countersubjects in BWV 536(ii). This fugue does not exhibit regular invertible contrapuntal command and as such, one cannot say that the countersubjects are a prolific feature in their differing guises. Nonetheless, their significance cannot fail to go unnoticed and perhaps the most prominent (albeit not regular from the offset) is that which commences in b.9. and is re-cast with each subject entry throughout the exposition:

Illustration No.57 – BWV 536 (ii) – bb.1 – 21.



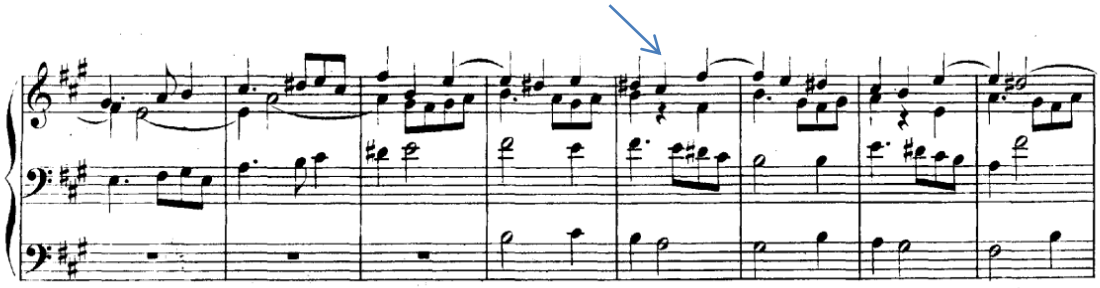
From b.21, the countersubject is woven into the alto line:

Illustration No.58 – BWV 536 (ii) – bb.12 – 29.



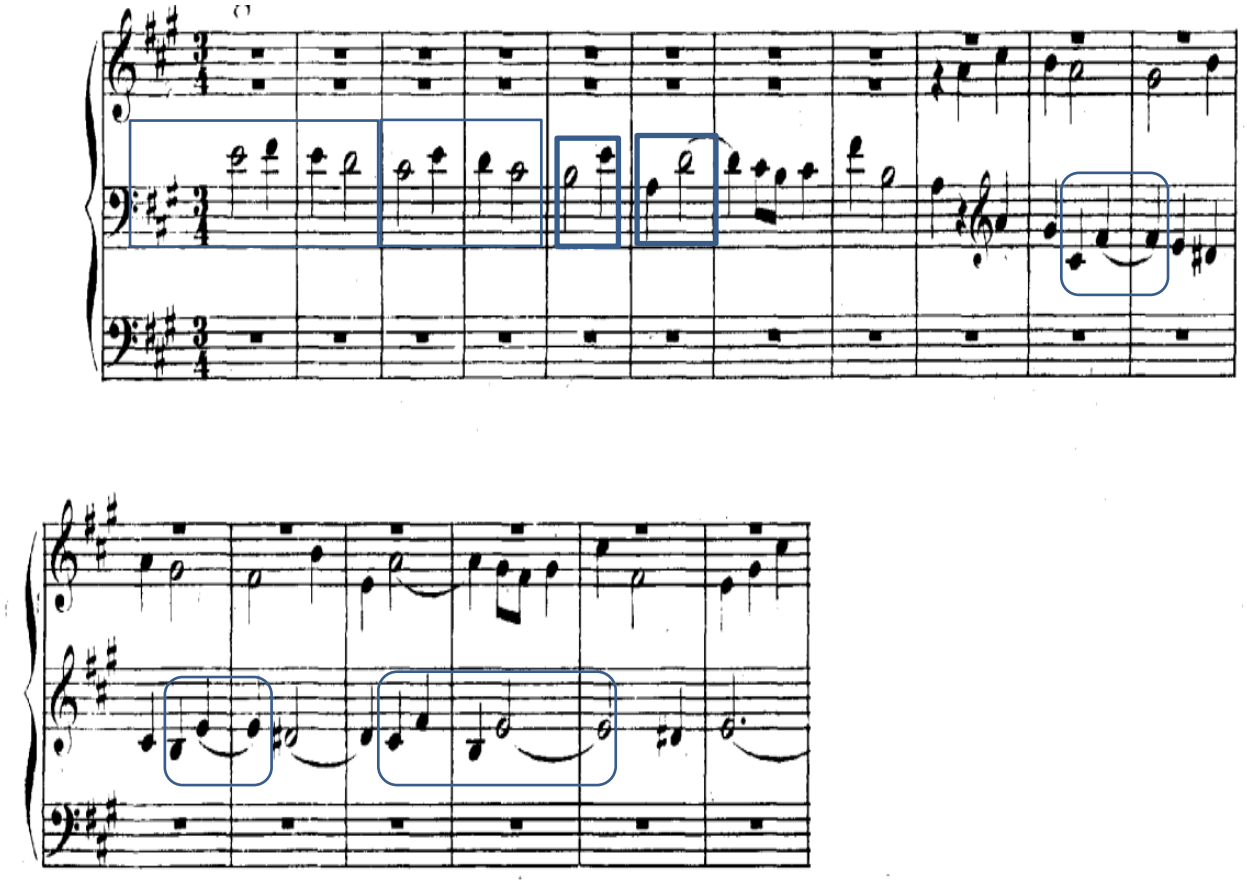
When the pedal finally enters, the countersubject then appears in the soprano:

Illustration No.59 – BWV 536 (ii) – bb.30 – 37.



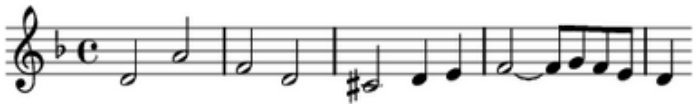
If one places both the subject and countersubject alongside, it is possible to witness the careful complimenting sequential designs so as to allow the use of effortless sequence which Bach of course fulfils.

Illustration No.60 – BWV 536 (ii) – bb.1 – 17.



This is typical of Bach's more mature works: fugal subjects were not simply plucked from the air, but rather the focus now turns to the design and to see how many contrapuntal permutations the subjects can undergo, and indeed the malleability with other contrapuntal lines; one only needs to look at the teasing simplicity for the subject from the Art of Fugue (BWV 1080).

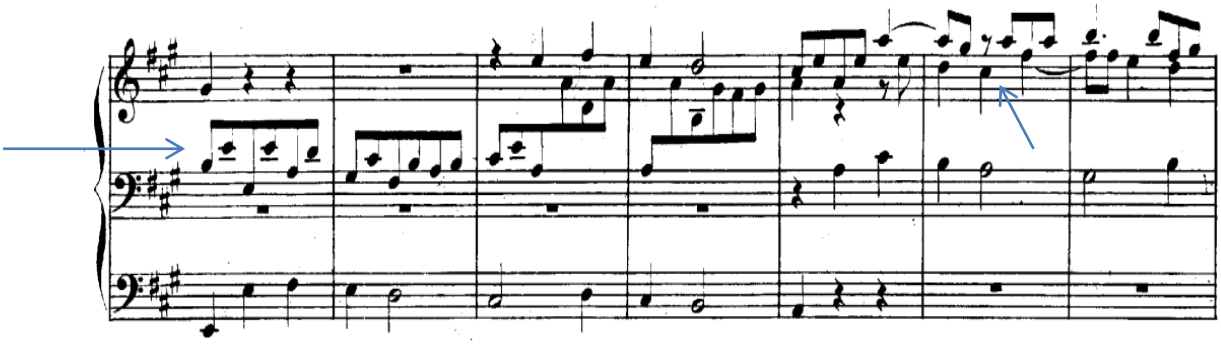
Illustration No.61 – BWV 1080 – *Contrapunctus I* bb.1 – 5.



Of course, through each of the 14 separate fugues, Bach demonstrates practically all the permutations possible.

Perhaps one of the reasons why no one has yet commented on the use of countersubjects in this fugue is possibly due to the reason that with entry of the subject (in whichever form), there is always some slight melodic variation. Moreover, from b.47, there begins another countersubject (ii) which is frequently alongside (i). However, Bach never adheres to their identical melodic contour and there is always some slight deviation or variation.

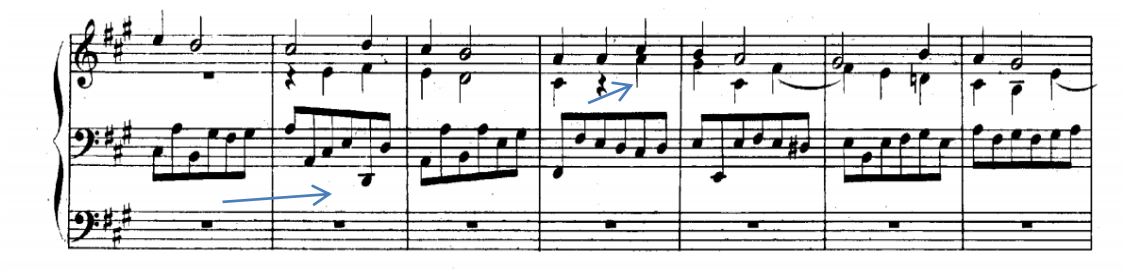
Illustration No.62 – BWV 536 (ii) – bb.45 – 51.



The diagram above (bb.45-51) proves this very clearly: the oscillating countersubject (ii) at b.45 can be regarded as more of a stylistic idea, whereas countersubject (i) at b.50 is more prescriptive and less distinguishable.

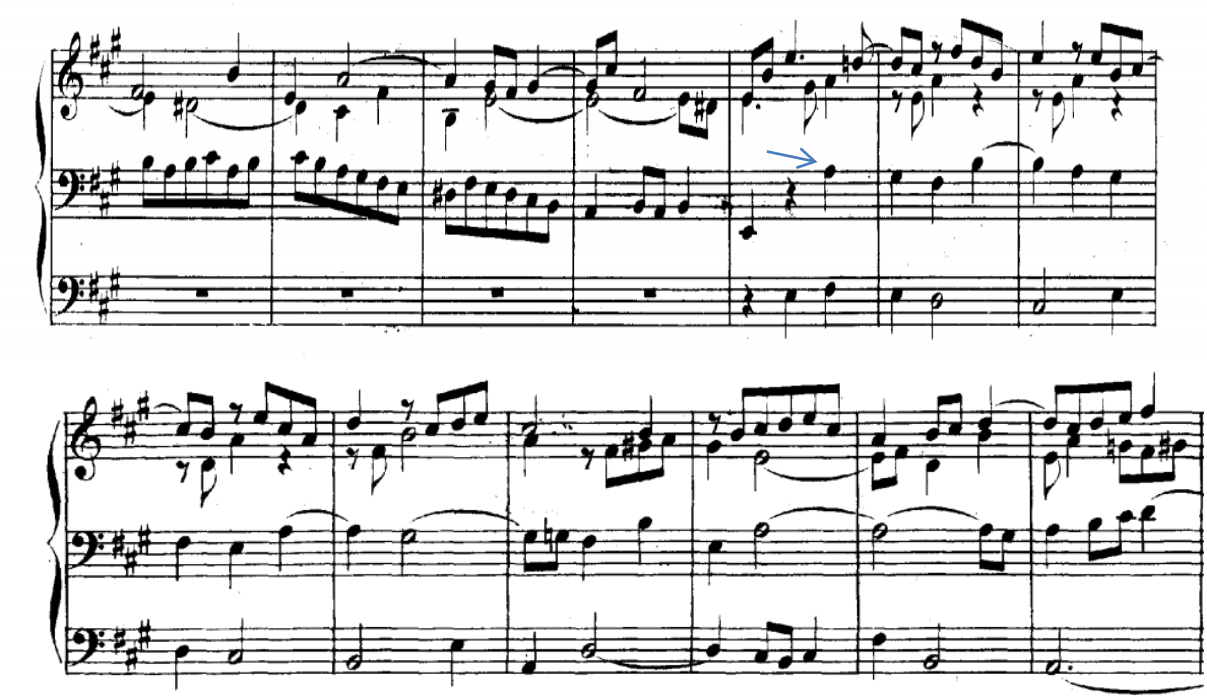
Beneath are three more diagrams illustrating Bach's different handling and treatment of the two countersubjects:

Illustration No.63 – BWV 536 (ii) – bb.66 – 72.



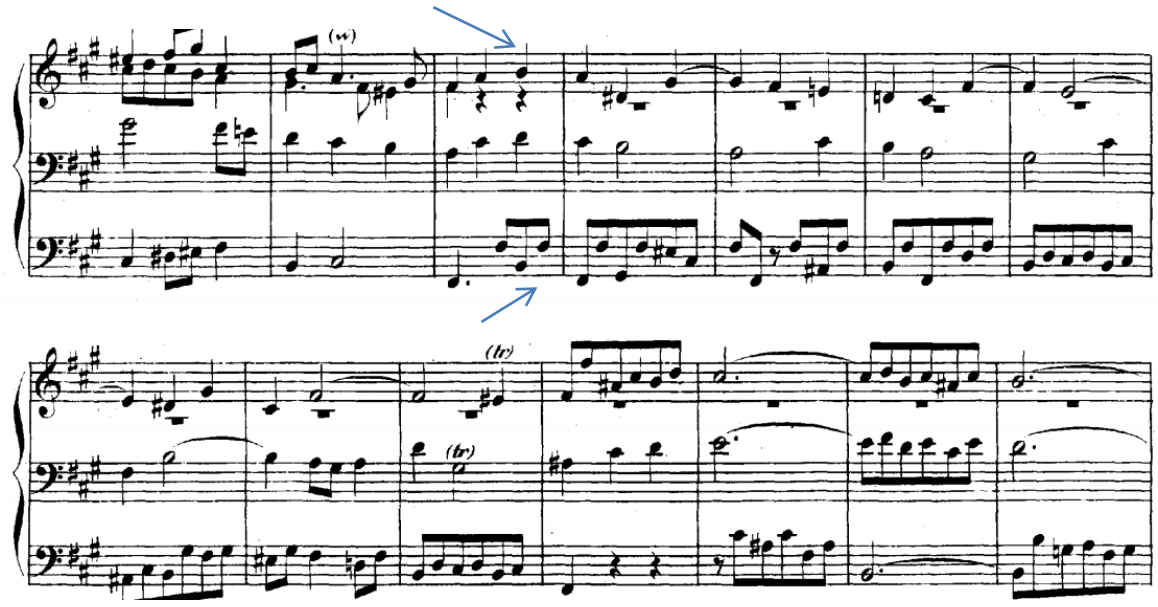
The oscillating countersubject (ii) begins in earnest in the bass but follows a slightly different outline beneath the abridged subject entry in the alto (b.67). Thereafter, it then resolves into a free-wheeling running bass line. Meanwhile, countersubject (i) is reinstated in the alto, albeit with slight variation at b.69 beneath a full statement of the subject in the soprano.

Illustration No.64 – BWV 536 (ii) - bb.73 – 84



Only countersubject (i) is present throughout this passage above in the tenor (with free counterpoint woven in the alto and soprano).

Illustration No.65 – BWV 536 (ii) – bb.87 – 100.



Both countersubjects are present in the above passage from b.89. Again, countersubject (ii) is by nature more stylistic and thus Bach allows this to be freer in terms of its compatibility (see pedal line). Countersubject (i) is much closer in sequential outline and is maintained in the soprano.

Above all, these three passages show the beginning of the use of regular triple-invertible counterpoint. However, it is certainly not a formal and regular process at this stage. As Glen Gould once remarked in a televised interview concerning the 48 Preludes and Fugues, Bach's skill as a mature contrapuntalist was not really reached until he was about 35 years of age (1720). The publication of the first 24 Preludes and Fugues in 1722 shows a much more learned understanding and ease with such techniques. Nonetheless, it is clear that the hallmarks can be found in earlier works such as this fugue. Whilst on the one hand Bach can frequently be seen as a progressive, on the other hand the question of invertible counterpoint was a skill long admired and utilized (albeit not so extensively) in the 16th and early 17th centuries.

> Historically, there is a sense of chronology, of cultural history, of how Bach relates to his contemporaries. But also, put him in a broader context. For instance, where does he come from? Bach was one of the very few musicians of his time who had a historical interest. He really studied music of the past. He looked at works by Frescobaldi and Palestrina. At the same time, he was always forward-looking because he was a teacher.[47]

Whilst the fugue does not consistently conform to regular triple invertible counterpoint throughout, Bach does nonetheless display with effortless ease the overlapping of subject entries. This is not to be just seen as deliberate *stretti* (not least because the subject entries are not immediately entering after one another), but rather Bach is frequently using and displaying a much greater contrapuntal volley. Whereas in the three preceding fugues there are lengthy episodes, in this fugue they are much shorter, often being of no more than a few bars. In the first diagram overleaf, it is nonetheless interesting to note in Illustration No.66 that the first two entries are undoubtedly not full length entries (the third entry is however a full statement at b.49). Yet, with Illustration No.67, they are all full statements. Again, this makes such clear reference to fugue being that of a mosaic of textural ideas.

[47] Marchione, Tonimarie, 'Exploring Bach in Depth Faculty Q&A With Christoph Wolff' *The Julliard Journal,* February 2011, p.1

Illustration No.66 – BWV 536 (ii) – bb.45 – 58.

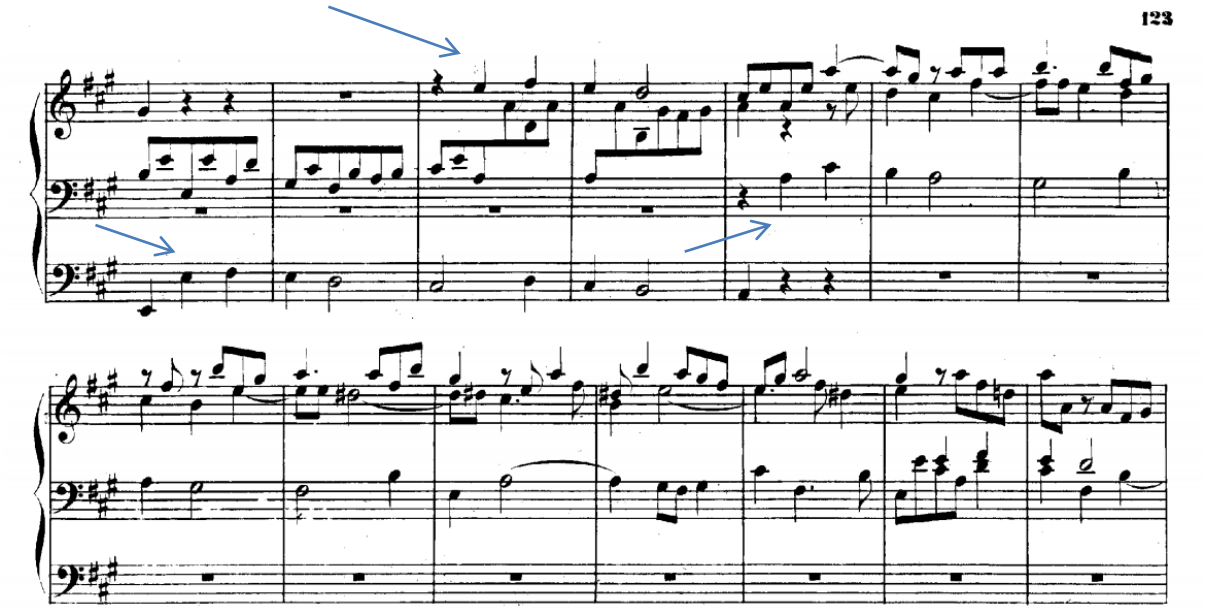
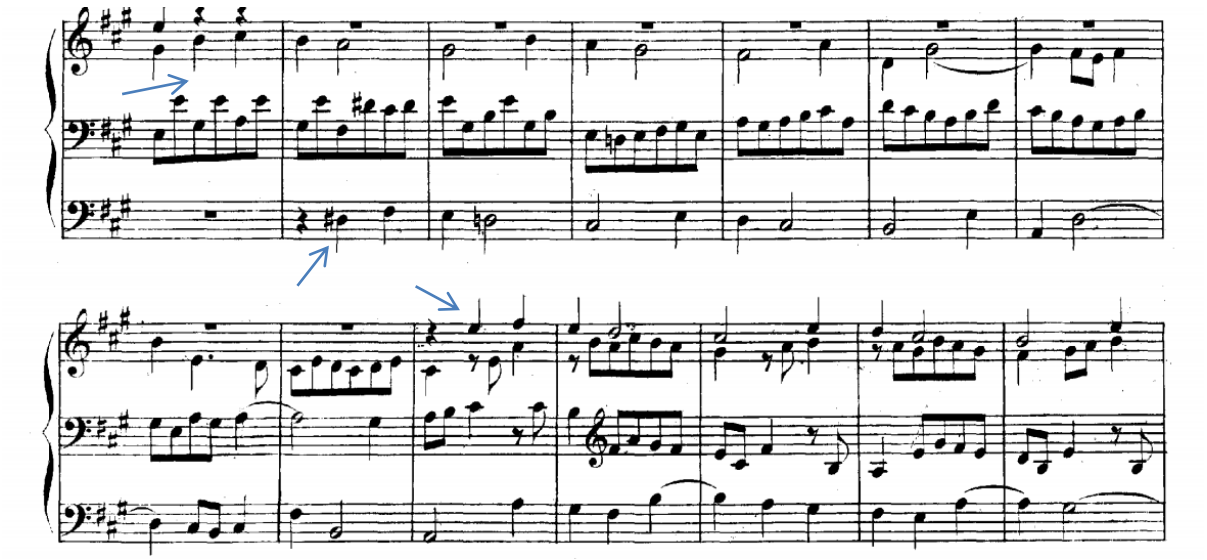


Illustration No.67 – BWV 536 (ii) – bb.137 – 149.



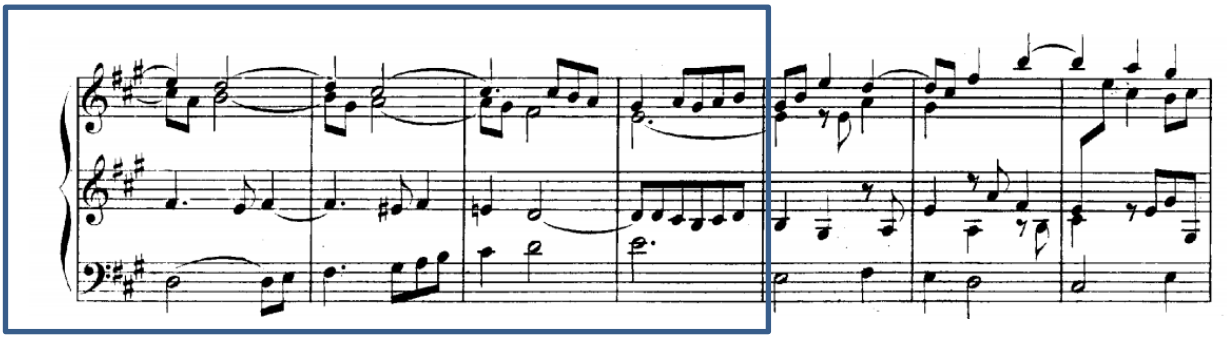
Ultimately, the contrapuntal concentration of this fugue is considerably more complex, and one can see the importance of architecture beginning to emerge. With this in mind, Bach deliberately delays the final subject entry in the pedal after what is the longest and most thickly textured episode, all based fundamentally on the cycle of 5ths and sequence: it is arguable that this prolongation is deliberate. Moreover, the rich sonorities of double suspensions, particularly at b.157, further allude to this sense of longing for the final entry. It is well known that Bach belonged to the Baroque era of music, but one can often hear much of 'Bach the romantic' in his music. Words cannot describe

precisely how Bach knew to communicate, but it is nonetheless possible to draw a comparison with perhaps one of the most discussed composers of this topic – Richard Wagner (1813-83). Briefly, music was not just a journey through time but rather, music could take on a different form that could convey tension, release, association of ideas, the ability to trigger images. Bach's music undoubtedly has just the same ability.

> Yet Kierkegaard discovered something important about music's immediate sensuousness. Whereas erotic arousal in life depends on visual, gustatory, olfactory and tactile sensations, it is the absence of sight, smell, taste or touch that accounts for music's effect as an aphrodisiac. That is, once a composer decides to tap this source the invisibility of erotic objects fuels music's seductive power.[48]

By comparison with Bach's contemporaries, none was as capable of providing such sensual and rich counterpoint. It is convincing that Bach must have felt great affection for certain melodic ideas, sequences and structural patterns. Beneath and overleaf are three examples (two from this fugue, the other from the B Minor Fugue Book 1 BWV 869) which illustrate recurrences of melodic ideas, sequence and structural patterns which arguably illustrate and project a sense of heightened expression:

Illustration No.68 – BWV 536 (ii) – bb.157 – 163.



[48] Dreyfus, Laurence, *Wagner and the Erotic Impulse* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012) p.11

Illustration No.69 – BWV 536 (ii) – bb.171 – 182.

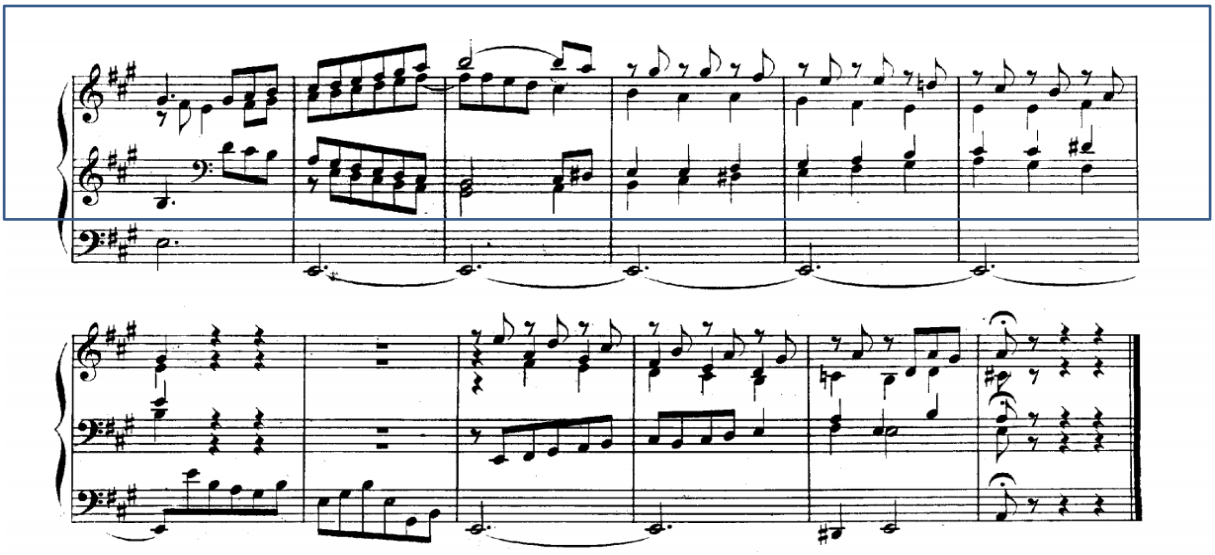
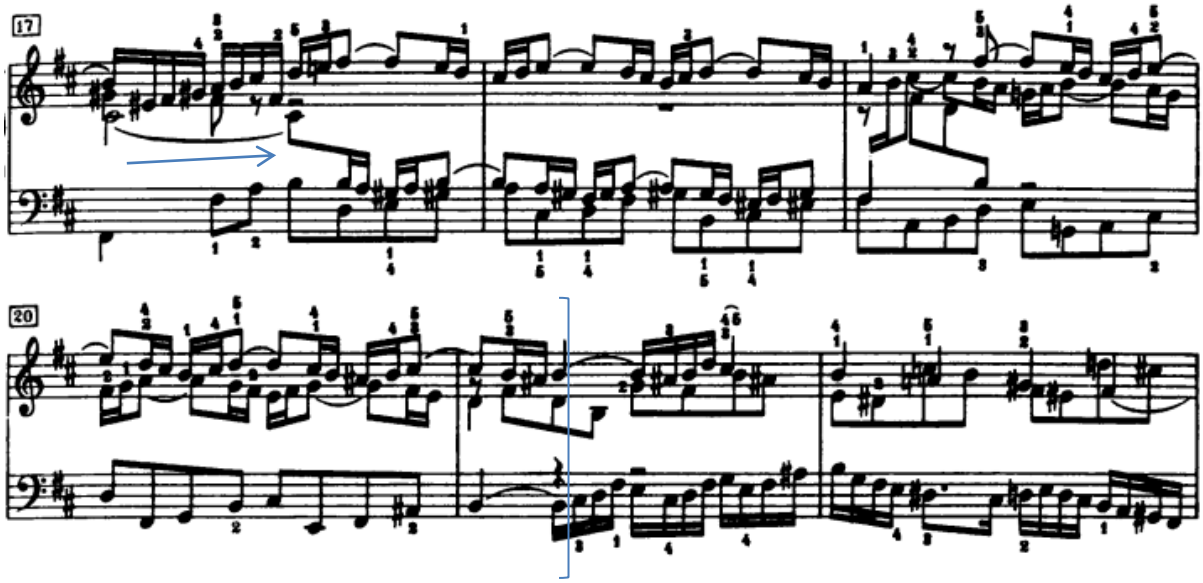


Illustration No.70 – BWV 869 (ii) – bb.17 – 22.



With Bach, music takes on implied added meanings and dimensions far more considerable than his contemporaries – music also became a means of at times overwhelmingly expressive communication. It is not to say that other composers were incapable of providing sufficient *affekt* within music. However, with Bach, the concentration (in both senses) is much stronger.

> It is this weaving together of such diversity into a unity which generates Bach's harmonies. The sequence of consonances and dissonances are not generated as a sequence of sounds; they are the artefacts of a developed form of polyphony, a higher form of harmony. [49]

Consequently, BWV 536 (ii) contains a lot more sophistication that its critics too freely deny. It marks the departure from both *Stylus Phantasticus* and purely string writing passages – it marks the beginning of a quest for contrapuntal distillation and is again the foreshadow of the more contrapuntally sophisticated works. It is not a mature work of Bach but it does nonetheless show a turning point of Bach's approach and equally as important, the role of music being a direct expression of the mind.

> Bach was no longer operating with the early style that served for the toccatas, with its pattern-based writing and strong leanings towards the North German stylus phantasticus, but had already developed that mature style, compounded of operatic, *concertante*, motivic and contrapuntal elements, that would in essence serve him for the rest of his life.[50]

[49] Beets, Megan, *Johannes Kepler's Harmony of the Worl*d - *Bach's Harmonies,* Book III (LAROUCHE PAC Website)

[50] Jones, Richard, 'His superior ideas are the consequences of those inferior ones': Influence and Independence in Bach's Early Creative Development' in *Understanding Bach, Bach Network UK* 2008, p.38

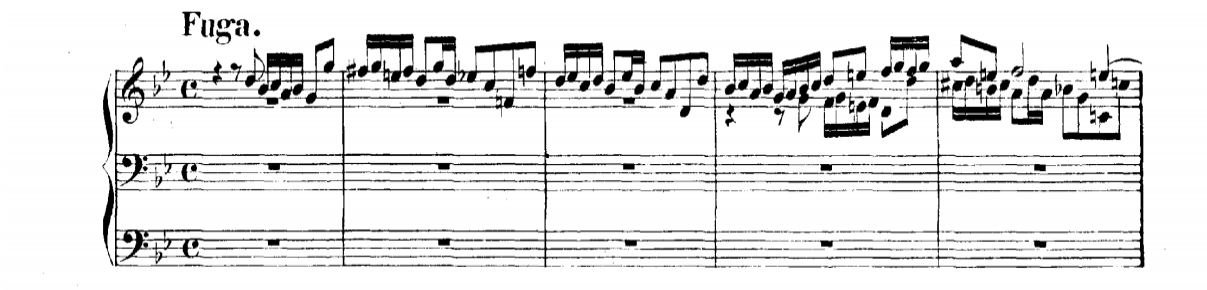
CHAPTER 5

Fugue in G Minor BWV 542 (ii) - Contrapuntal exploration, rhythm and tonal plan

> Almost the central characteristic of Bach's fugal style is the working together of tonal, thematic and textural elements to produce a massive, controlled sense of architecture; it is the apparently effortless union of structure and organic growth, realised through fugal technique, which accounts for the traditional view of the fugue as the form in which Bach was most essentially himself.[51]

With BWV 536 (ii) illustrating a notable departure in the mid-Weimar period (1711-14) from previously encountered compositional models, BWV 542 (ii) marks the beginning of an influential technique which Bach so often applied to his music – that of the dance.

Illustration No.71 – BWV 542 (ii) – bb.1 – 5.



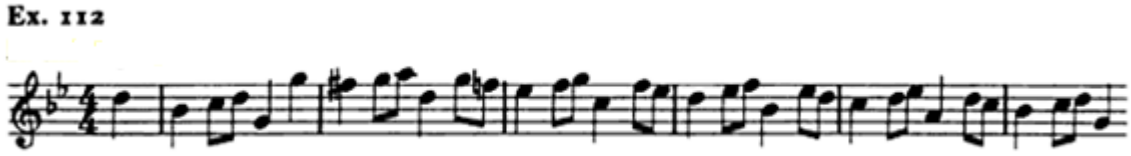
> Bach incorporates bourée dance rhythms not only in several works for keyboard and for small instrumental ensembles, but also in many cantata arias and duets, and in several concertos. In most cases, the beat is the quarter note, not the half note as in the titled *Bourées*…. After one penetrates these notational differences, however, one finds the characteristic *Bourée* patterns, balanced phrases, and joyful affect which attest to an origin in *Bourée* style.[52]

There is considerable evidence suggesting the reason as to *why* Bach wrote this fugue. Bach applied for the organist post at Hamburg where the ageing Johan Adam Reincken was due to retire. Whilst Bach did not secure the post, it is highly likely that he played this fugue in c.1720 as an audition piece, and one notable feature is the origin of the subject: it is based on the Dutch folk tune *Ik ben gegroet* –

[51] Humphreys, David, *The Esoteric Structure of Bach's Clavier Übung III* (Cardiff: Cardiff University Press, 1983) p.62

[52] Little, Meredith, and Jenne, Natalie, *Dance and the Music of J.S. Bach* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2001). p.206

Illustration No.72 – The melody of the Dutch folk tune *Ik ben gegroet* (Extract from *The Cambridge Companion to the organ works of J.S. Bach* Peter Williams, 1980.)



The Dutch origins would no doubt have been a tribute to Reincken who was Dutch himself. Moreover, Bach's admiration and indeed skill for improvising was already noted in his earlier days when the two met when Bach improvised upon the chorale *An Wasserflüssen Babylon*. Thus, two fundamental reasons as to why this fugue was written are, firstly, as a homage to Reincken, and secondly as a contrapuntal and virtuosic display. It is without doubt one of the more technically demanding fugues.

Turning now to the structure of the fugue, it is firstly necessary to examine the contour of the subject. Similarly to BWV 536 (ii), the conception is careful and the use of *sequentially implied harmonies* for each crotchet beat is practically unavoidable for all subsequent contrapuntal additions.

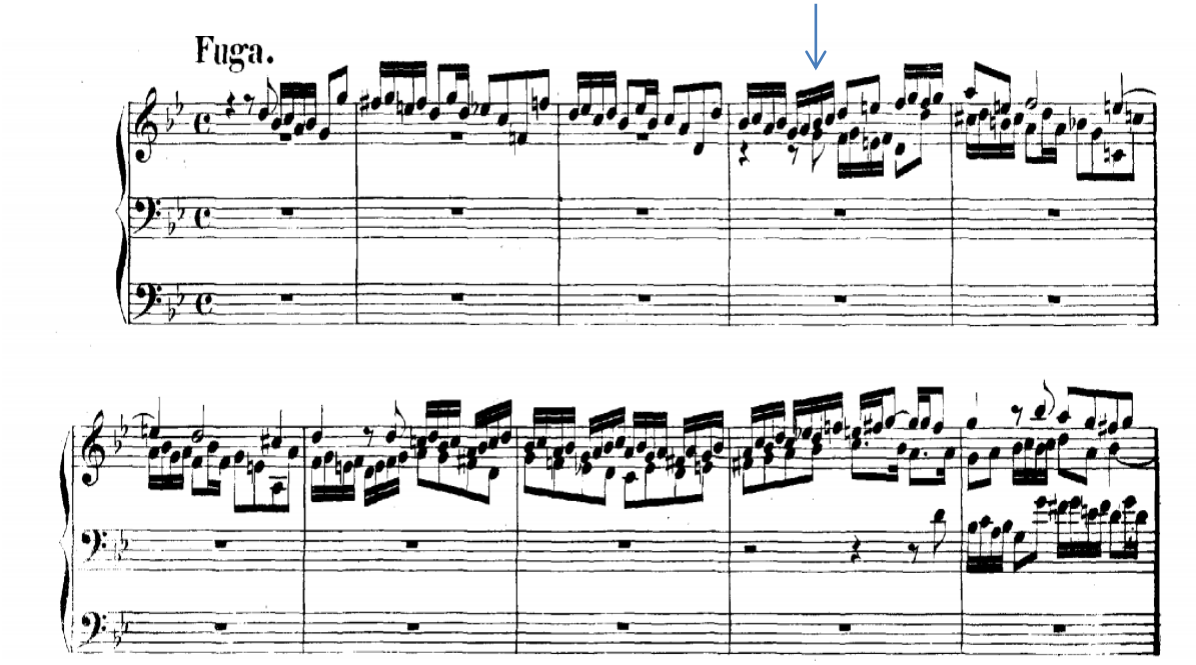
Illustration No.73 – BWV 542 (ii) – bb.1 – 4 (Soprano).

(+ = Major, - = Minor).

D+	G -	C -	F +	Bb +	Eb +	A -	D+

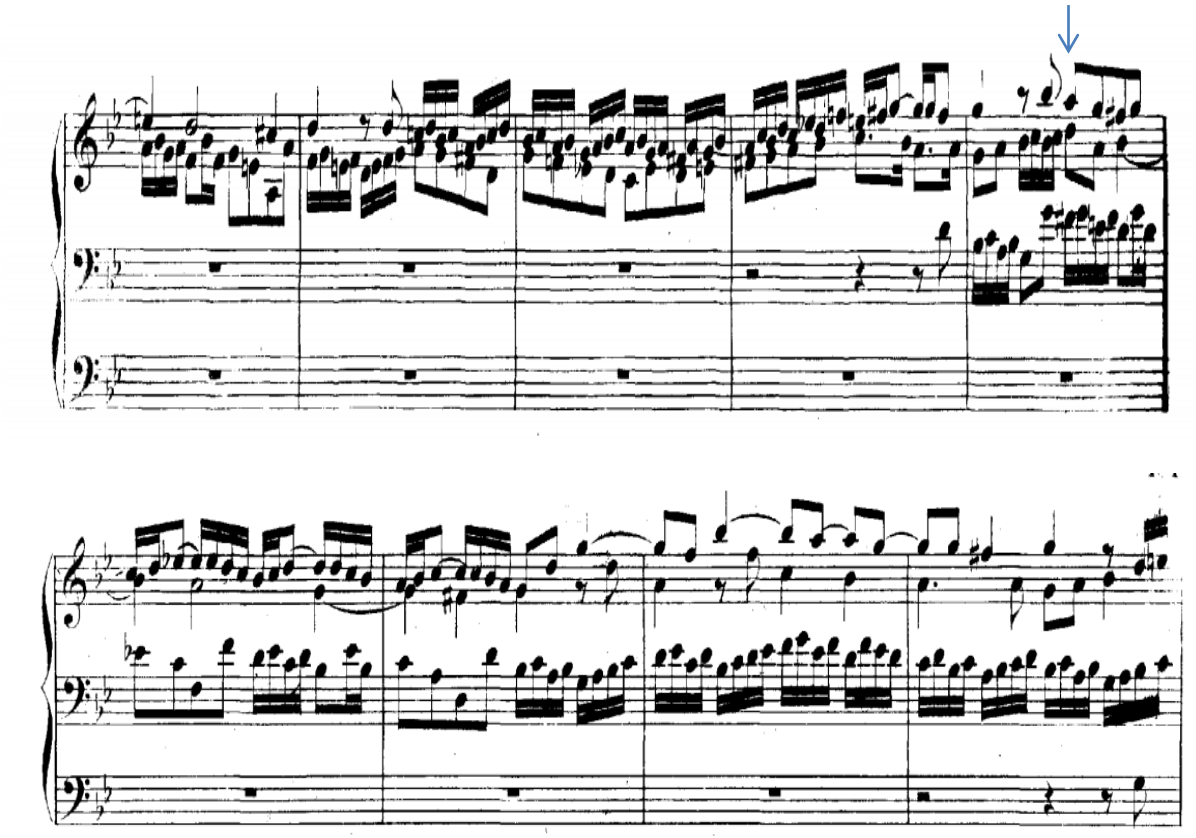
One can clearly see from the opening three bars the direct transposition and transformations of the idea encountered solely in b.1. Moreover, their sequential unity allows for the underlying harmony to evolve through a cycle of 5ths with each entry. With the next subject entry, Bach introduces what becomes the 1st recurring countersubject –

Illustration No.74 – BWV 542 (ii) – bb.1 – 10. The first countersubject begins at b.4 (Soprano).



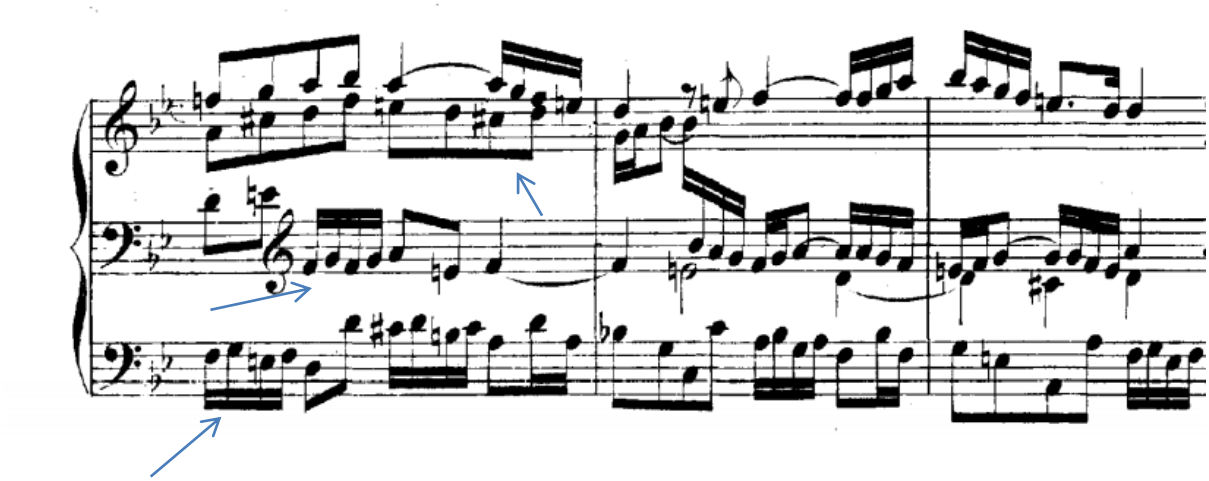
With the third subject entry, the 2nd and subsequently recurring countersubject is then introduced:

Illustration No.75 – BWV 542 (ii) – bb.6 – 14. The second countersubject begins at b.10 (Soprano).



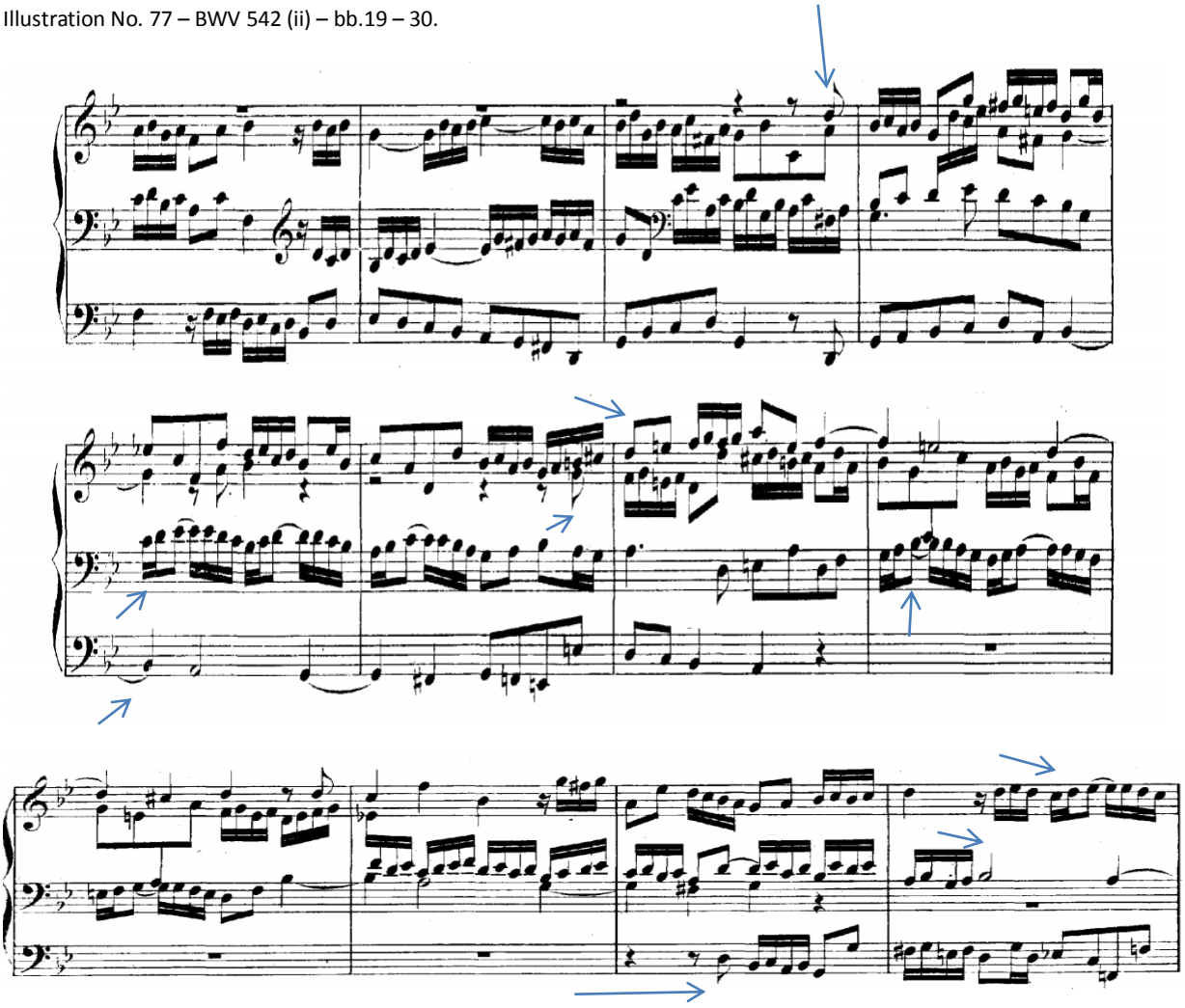
One can then see that when the pedal finally enters, the texture is clearly triple invertible between Bass (Ped.), Tenor and Alto, whilst there is a line of free counterpoint in the Soprano.

Illustration No.76 – BWV 542 (ii) – bb.15 – 17.



Whilst the above signifies what appears to be the end of the exposition, as all the voices have entered, Bach actually forms a double exposition (albeit incomplete by one entry). The succession is nonetheless clear as it follows the exact structure for each entry. However, the *essence* of triple invertible counterpoint is prevalent with each entry beneath:

Illustration No. 77 – BWV 542 (ii) – bb.19 – 30.



Whilst both the exposition and secondary exposition are treated using regular triple invertible counterpoint, a lot of the subject entries which prevail subsequently are not treated in the same way. It is not a 'triple fugue', nor can this be seen as a fugue that is strictly 'triple invertible', nor can it be seen as a fugue with two consistent regular countersubjects.

Beneath is a table highlighting the main subject entries as well as the two recurring countersubjects albeit not always in their original guise. However, their use is frequently systematic and the essence of triple invertible counterpoint is a distinctive feature. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that Bach frequently omits a full entry of either countersubject - they sometimes appear in a contracted form.

Table No.8 – the subject entries which occur throughout BWV 542 (ii).

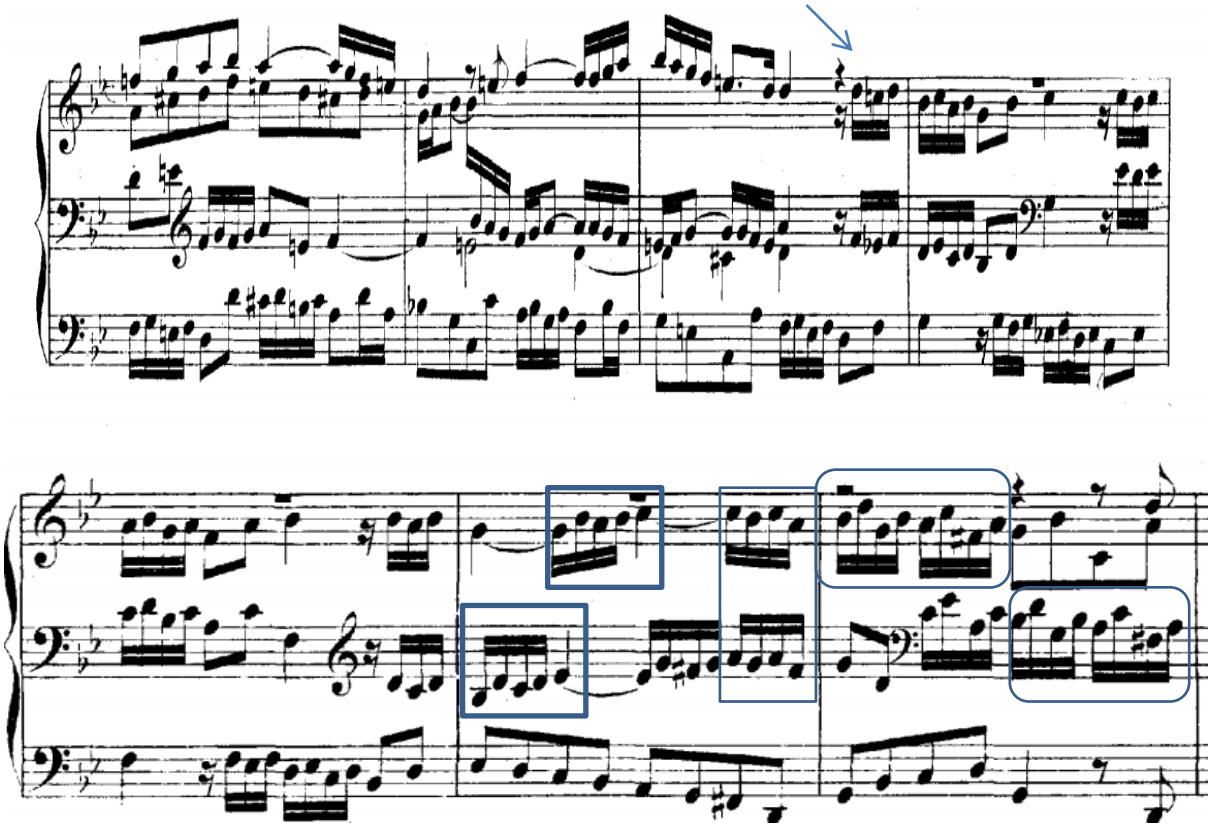
Measure	Device	Voice
1	S	Soprano
4	S - 5	Alto
4	C/S (i)	Soprano
9	S - 8	Tenor
10	C/S (i) - 5	Alto
10	C/S (ii)	Soprano
14	S – 12	Bass (Ped.)
15	C/S (i) - 8	Tenor
15	C/S (ii) - 4	Alto
21	S	Soprano
22	C/S (i) – 19 (Contracted)	Bass (Ped.)
23	C/S (ii) – 8 (Contracted)	Tenor
24	S – 5	Alto
25	C/S (i)	Soprano
26	C/S (ii) - 11	Tenor
29	S – 15	Bass (Ped.)
30	C/S (i) - 12	Tenor
30	C/S (ii)	Soprano
36	S – 13 (*per arsin et thesin*)	Tenor
37	C/S (i) - 3	Soprano
38	C/S (ii) - 6	Alto
44	S (Contracted)	Soprano
50	S – 12	Tenor
54	S – 16	Bass (Ped.)
55	C/S (i) - 13	Tenor
56	C/S (ii) – 2 (Melodic Alteration)	Soprano
63	S – (Contracted)	Soprano
65	S – 8	Tenor
66	C/S (i) + 4	Soprano
72	S + 4	Soprano

73	C/S (i) - 9	Tenor
73	C/S (ii) *Variant*	Bass (Ped.)
79	S – 3	Alto
93	S	Soprano
101	S – 15 (*per arsin et thesin*)	Tenor
103	S – 8	Alto
104	C/S (i) - 12	Tenor
104	C/S (ii)	Soprano
110	S - 15	Bass (Ped.)

What is curious to observe is that in the secondary exposition, there are only three statements of the principal subject – the tenor never enters. There are no rules or reasons as to why or why not this is the case. Moreover, why is the fugue not strictly triple invertible all the way through? It comes back to the original point that fugue is merely a textural style and that 'rules' simply do not apply.

The bridge passage overleaf between the two expositions is of considerable interest as it illustrates how the vast majority of all subsequent episodic passages are related. Bach effectively takes the descending four semiquaver pattern as the main thematic idea and then tirelessly explores variations on this theme.

Illustration No.78 – BWV 542 (ii) – bb.15 – 21.



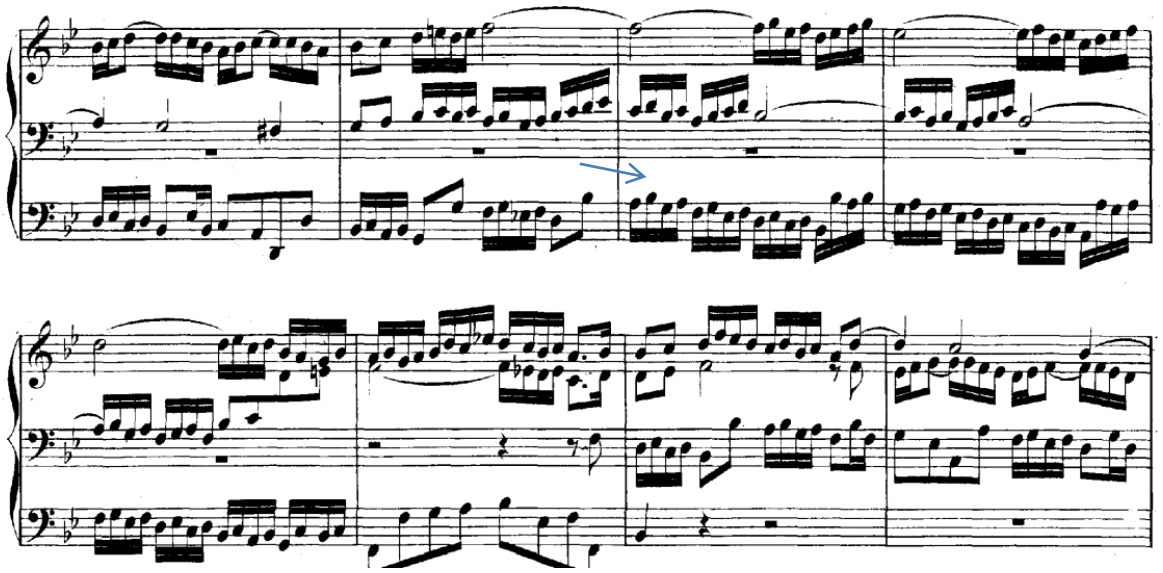
The cycle of 5ths as a means of sequence is clear, as is the use of antiphony between the pedal and the upper voices. In addition, what appears to be a slight change in pattern(s) from b.20, one can nonetheless see the meticulous working out of patterns – the *alto* and soprano have a rising melodic pattern in sequence. Both voices are then together at b.20 (4) using the reverse configuration of the four note of the pattern. Similarly, one can visualise the distribution of a different pattern between the **alto and tenor** at b.21. Bach had a remarkable gift for taking relatively simple ideas but being able to work out tireless permutations.

One can see overleaf from the passage bb.33 – 36 that the episodic passage is so clearly *based* on that descending four semiquaver pattern (except the cadential bar – b.36). What might seem an exhaustive idea of recurring material, it never sounds as such. The virtuosic nature of the pedal line speaks for itself and those present at the Hamburg audition cannot have failed to have noticed this element:

> Bach's feet flew over the pedal board as if they had wings; and the ponderous and ominous tones pierced the ear of the hearer like a flash of lightning or a clap of thunder.[53]

[53] Grace, Harvey, *The Organ Works of J.S. Bach* (London, Novello, 1920) p.52

Illustration No.79 – BWV 542 (ii) – bb.31 – 38.



The antiphonal dialogue between the upper two voices is immediately apparent and stems from the aforementioned example illustrating the previous two episodic passages. What is perhaps a slightly unusual feature of this fugue, compared with the other fugues analysed so far, is the use of a perfect cadence to signify the transitional modulation to a related key. Bb Major (the relative major) is clearly stated at b.37 by an entry in the tenor. What is curious to note in this fugue is that there is never a distinct *modulation* to the key of the dominant. Instead, Bach explores the related keys which surround that of the relative major.

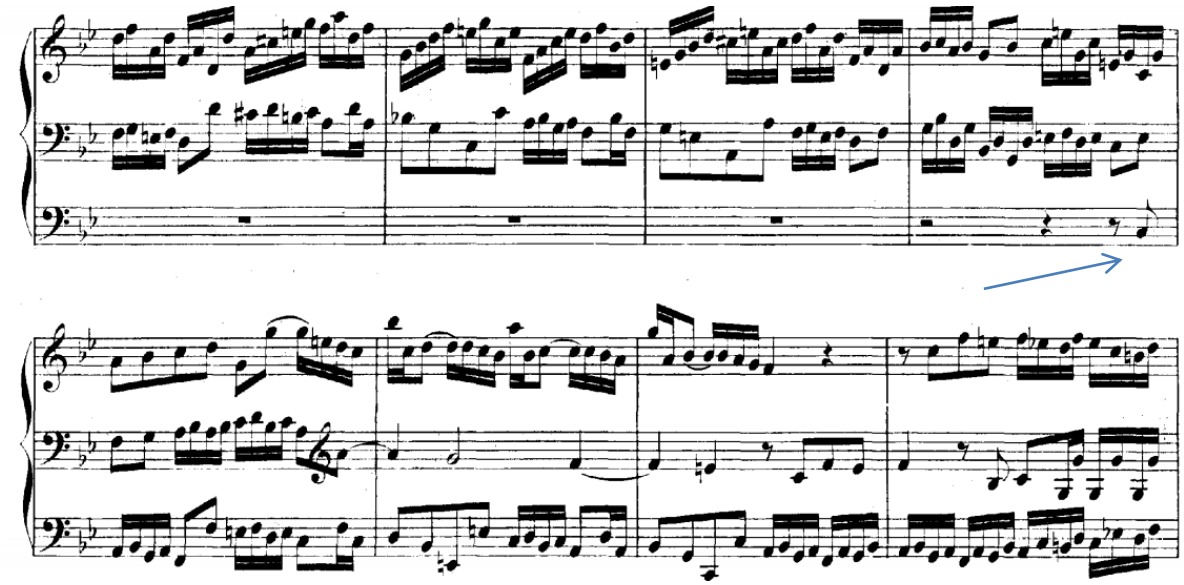
> An articulate movement to the dominant (or its substitute) is all that is required harmonically of a sonata exposition: how it is done is completely free, or, rather, bound only by the nature and material of each individual work. There is a movement toward the dominant in most Baroque music, too, even in the early Baroque, but it is rarely made either articulate – that is, decisive or dramatic. [54]

Whilst the dominant is not polarised as a tonal destination, Bach clearly signifies passing modulations to Bb Major, F Major, C Minor and Eb Major, all of which are prepared by means of a perfect cadence into these respective keys.

[54] Rosen, Charles, *The Classical Style*, (London, Faber and Faber, 2005) p.69

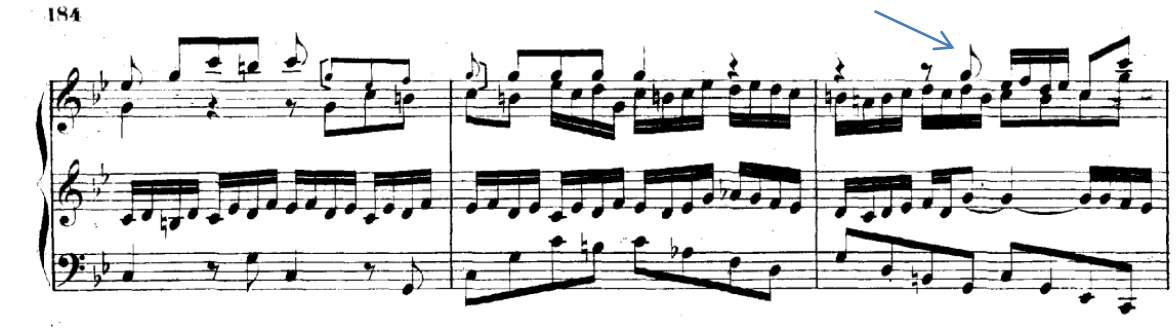
Cadence into F Major

Illustration No.80 – BWV 542 (ii) – bb.51 – 58.



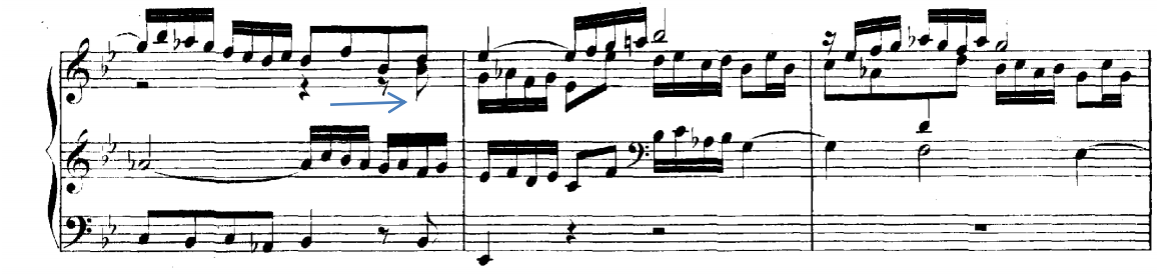
Cadence into C Minor

Illustration No.81 – BWV 542 (ii) – bb.70 – 72.



Cadence into Eb Major

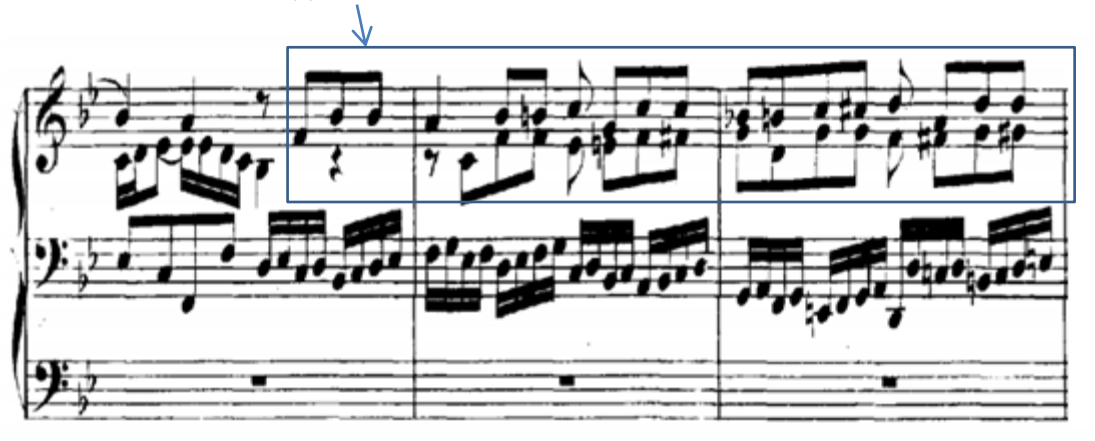
Illustration No.82 – BWV 542 (ii) – bb.79 – 81.



It is apparent that Bach's use of an overarching tonal plan as an underlying structure is considerably more apparent than in previous fugues: the above extracts all show a clear sense of tonal planning and direction.

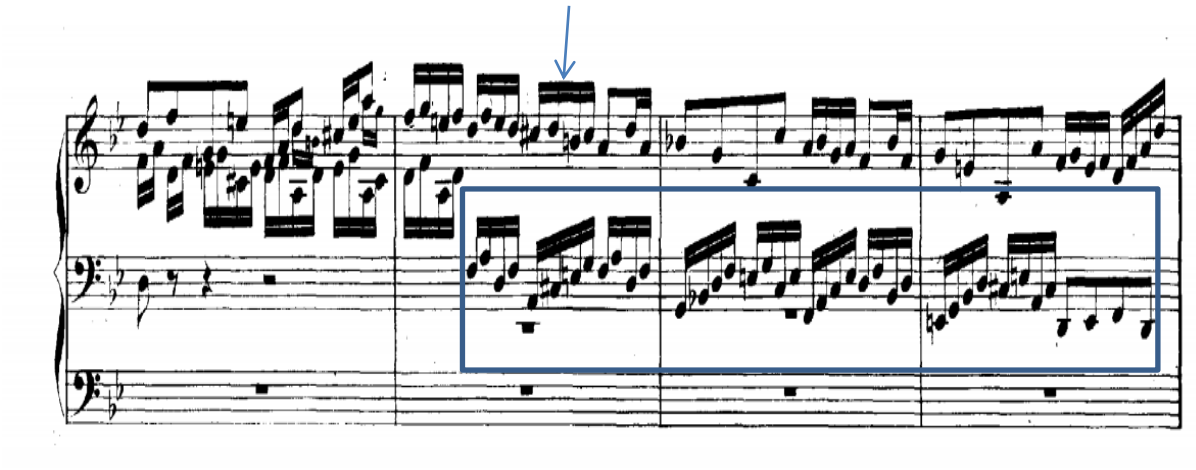
Referring back to b.40 and the nature of episodic material, the reduced three part texture in this instance arguably provides formidable insight into the work process of Bach's mind. The passage bb.40 – 41 illustrates so perfectly the use of sequence as a means to expand such simple but effective thematic material.

Illustration No.83 – BWV 542 (ii) – bb.39 – 41.



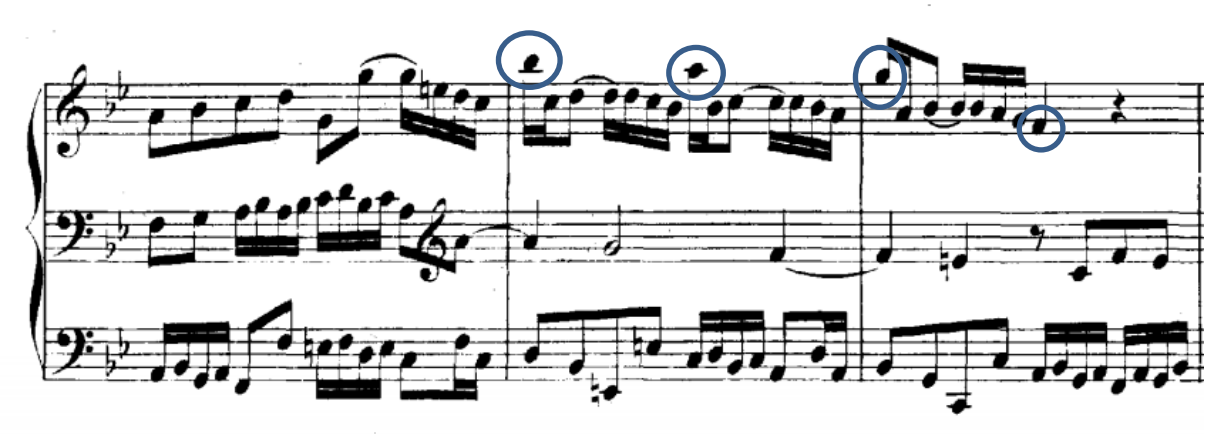
This aspect of antiphony and sequence is absolutely pivotal to the internal structure of virtually all the episodic passages throughout this fugue. In addition, the proof that Bach clearly thought about the design of the very subject, and the sequential and harmonic permutations that could be extracted, is firmly illustrated in bb.44 – 46, the soprano having the subject entry with the running bass providing the harmonic evidence (cycle of 5ths):

Illustration No.84 – BWV 542 (ii) – bb.43 – 46.



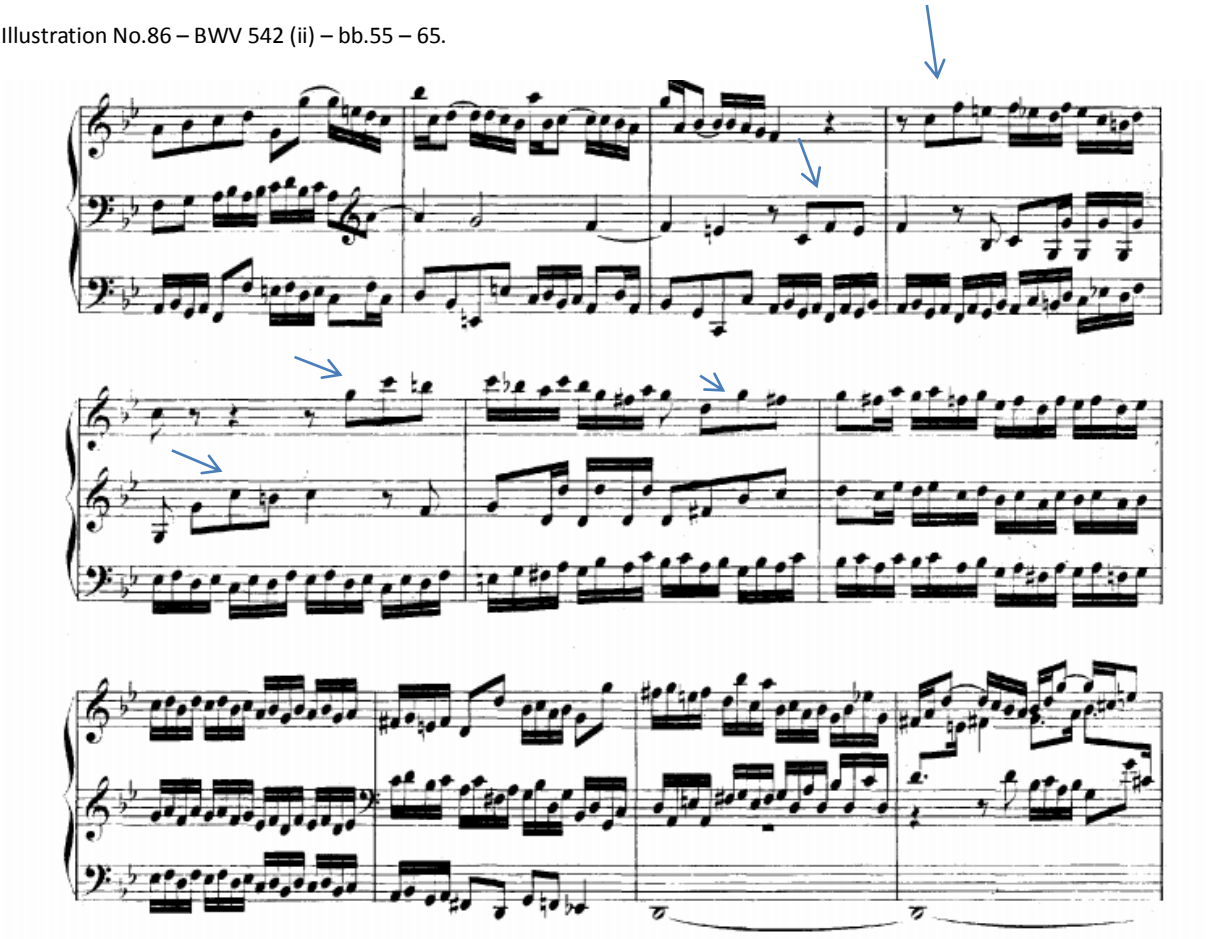
As is clearly illustrated, the episodic passages very rarely contain 'free counterpoint' as virtually all the material stems from the initial brief flurry of descending semiquavers. There is little variation to his contrapuntal approach although there is one noticeable feature concerning Countersubject (ii) – bb.55 – 57, the melodic contour is inverted:

Illustration No. 85 – BWV 542 (ii) - bb. 55 – 57.



A logical explanation for this is that Bach was perhaps intending to clarify and expose the downward melodic trajectory and subsequently the tonal direction – F Major. Furthermore, this is not the only instance of voice-leading adjustment. Such instances were probably intended to obviate the potential tedium and provide subtle variety to a recurring idea. The episodic passage which follows is of particular interest for two reasons. Firstly, it introduces what I have called 'the questioning' motif:

Illustration No.86 – BWV 542 (ii) – bb.55 – 65.



Secondly, it becomes prevalent as a recurring motif in several instances but particularly during episodic passages throughout bb.57 – 93. Again, the episodes are thematically based and there is this notion of developing and expanding upon the same thematic idea to maintain a sense of continuity. Beneath are three examples all taken from subsequent episodic passages:

Illustration No.87 – BWV 542 (ii) – bb.66 – 69.

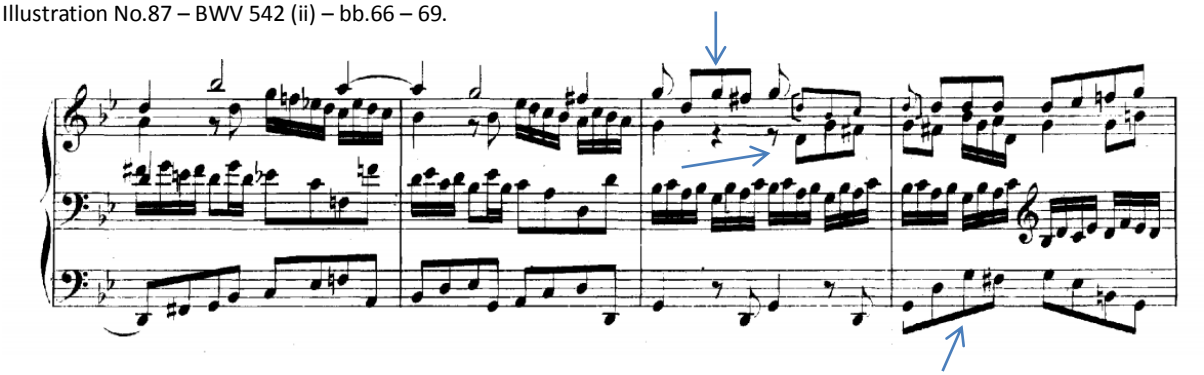


Illustration No.88 – BWV 542 (ii) – bb.82 – 84.

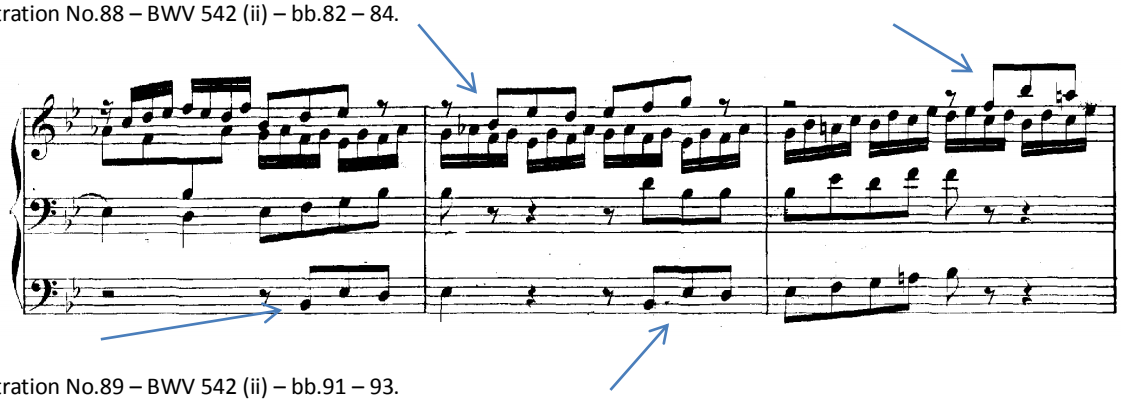
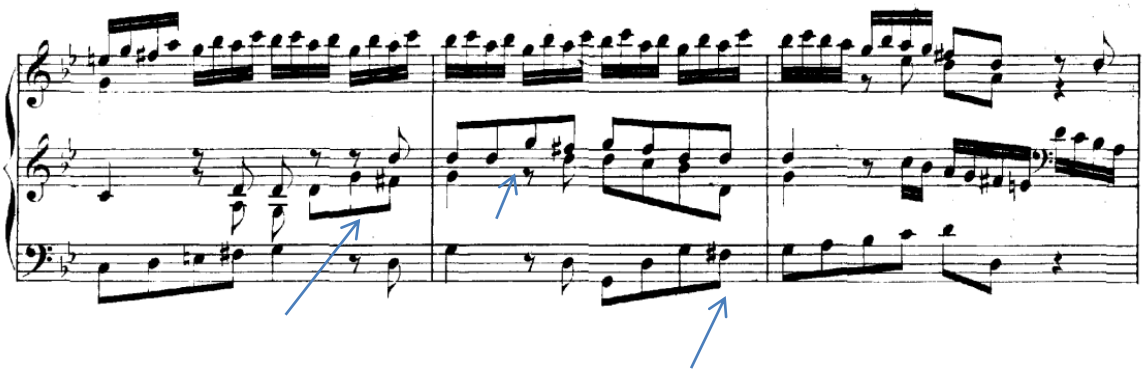


Illustration No.89 – BWV 542 (ii) – bb.91 – 93.



Undeniably, the reference is deliberate and it further demonstrates the idea of having relatively simple thematic ideas, but nonetheless used with remarkable imagination.

Concerning the running semiquavers (Illustration No.86 – b.61) descending in sequence in unison 6/3 chord figurations (b.61 (2) – 62) , Joel Lester's article '*Heightening Levels of activity and J.S. Bach's parallel – section constructions'* begins by highlighting three fundamental processes:

> Three constructive principles underlie the large-scale thematic and organizational aspects of J. S. Bach's compositions: (1) the opening of a piece states a core of material that is worked with throughout the composition; (2) recurrences of material almost invariably exhibit a heightening level of activity in some or all musical elements; and (3) movements quite frequently subdivide into roughly parallel sections within which these heightened recurrences appear. The interaction of these three principles, all pertinent to contemporaneous theoretical perspectives, provides a unified perspective on Bach's creations in all genres.[55]

It is not to say that this fugue can be divided up into succinct passages labelled A, B, C etc. This would almost be counterproductive. However, what is clearly visible is Bach's use of relatively few melodic ideas which he uses like planets orbiting one another in terms of succession and/or alongside one another (invertibility).

What has not been discussed in any detail is the sheer scale of this fugue. This fugue (and indeed the ones which follow) is of a symphonic design by comparison with more densely wrought compositions to be found in the '48'. As such, the use of tonal destinations as an underlying plan is apparent, as well as the preparation for these modulations:

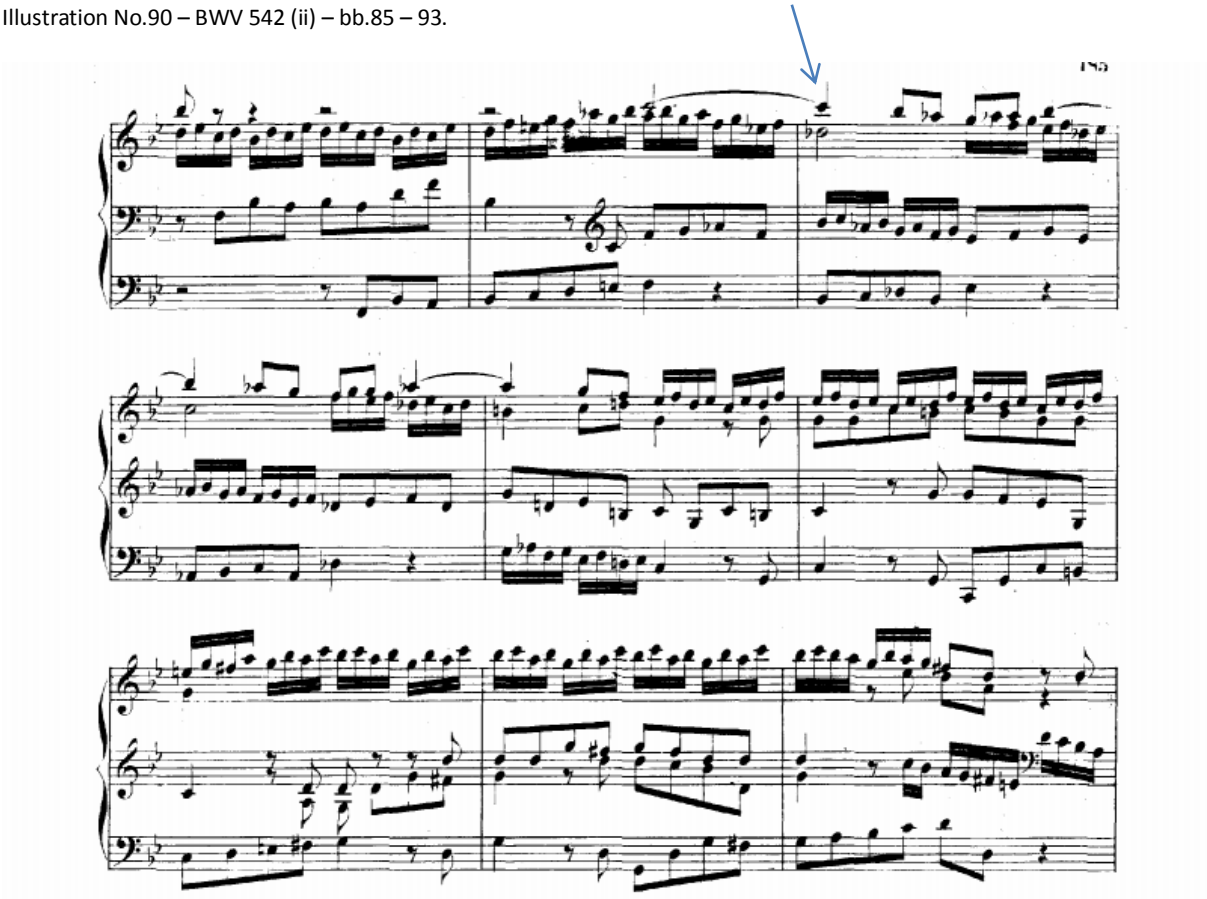
Table No.9 – the passing modulations throughout BWV 542 (ii).

Key	Relation to tonic	Measure
Bb Major	Relative Major	b.37
F Major	Dominant of the relative major	b.55
C Minor	Subdominant	b.72
Eb Major	Submediant	b.80

Whereas classical music relies heavily upon distinct proportion concerning structure, such principles will prove fruitless when trying to divide up a fugue into tonal areas. In addition, the tonal plan in this fugue is not at the forefront compared to the didactic range of motivic, rhythmic and localised harmonic progressions. In this instance, Bach does not have sustained pedal notes anticipating a modulation or instances of prolonged cadential formulae.

[55]Lester, Joel, 'Heightening Levels of Activity and J.S. Bach's Parallel Constructions' *Journal of the American Musicological Society, Vol. 54, No. 1.* (Spring 2001), p.52

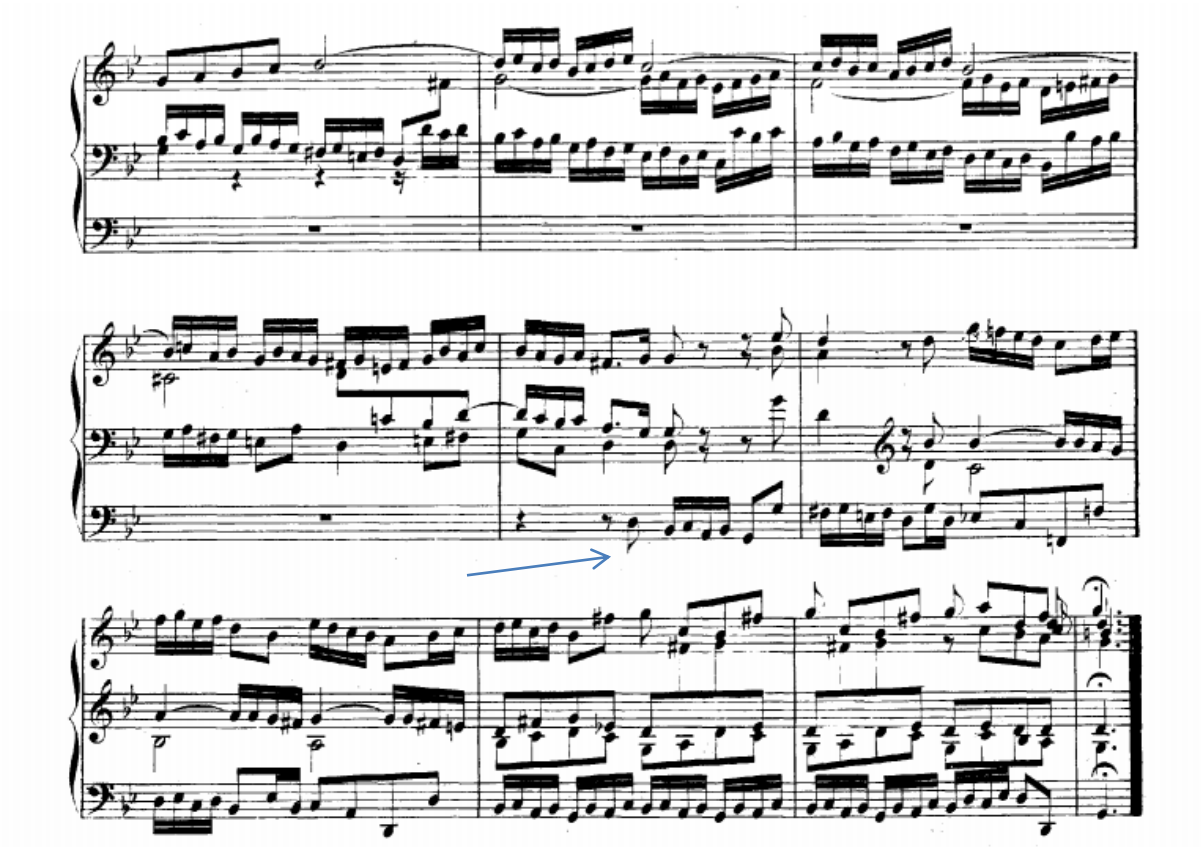
Illustration No.90 – BWV 542 (ii) – bb.85 – 93.



If one examines the above illustration, whilst of course the aforementioned rhythmic ideas are present, it is ultimately the rhythmic ideas and the way which these are then used by their patterns which dictate the harmony. For instance, one cannot say there is a cadence into Bb Minor with a 9/8 suspension in the soprano at b.87. Certainly, there is a passing modulation, but this is governed by how the rhythmic cells work; not through the utilisation of deliberate and sustained preparation. The dominant/tonic tension is more distinctive at bb.91 – 92, but every quaver beat has a different harmonic hallmark and again, it is the rhythmic ideas which are the mainstay of driving the harmony, not the other way round.

The final pedal entry and indeed the final subject entry very much epitomises how important rhythm really is throughout this fugue. If one took away this aspect, the harmonies themselves would have far less impetus.

Illustration No.91 – BWV 542 (ii) – bb.106 – 115.



Ultimately, BWV 542 (ii) represents far greater complexity and technical command. However, what is most revealing is how a substantial fugue is built upon relatively few ideas. It is not the case that Bach is using *fortspinnung* as a device of prolonging ideas for the sake of prolongation, but rather he is able to invent countless numbers of ideas *from* these patterns.

> What sets Bach's fugues apart from those of any other composer is the superb configuration of his themes which give the indelible stamp to each work. The themes stand firmly as though hewn from granite; their strong characteristic shapes are immutable entities of Bach's music. Even his counterpoints and countersubjects participate in the personal characterization and, consequently, many of Bach's countersubjects have more character than the primary subject of his predecessors. The elevation of the fugue to a 'character piece' embodying a single affection must be regarded as the culmination of the form. It was the ultimate step in the development that could be taken without breaking through the framework of baroque music altogether.[56]

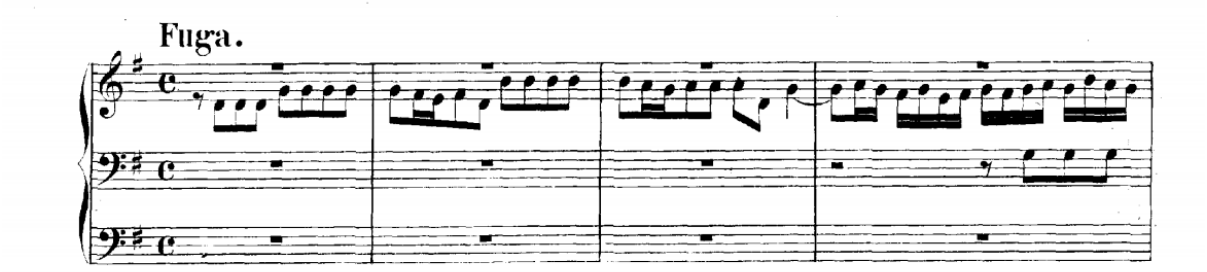
[56] Bukofzer, Manfred, *Music in the Baroque era from Monteverdi to Bach* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1947) p.287

CHAPTER 6

Fugue in G Major BWV 541 (ii) – The Use of Repetition and Dissonance

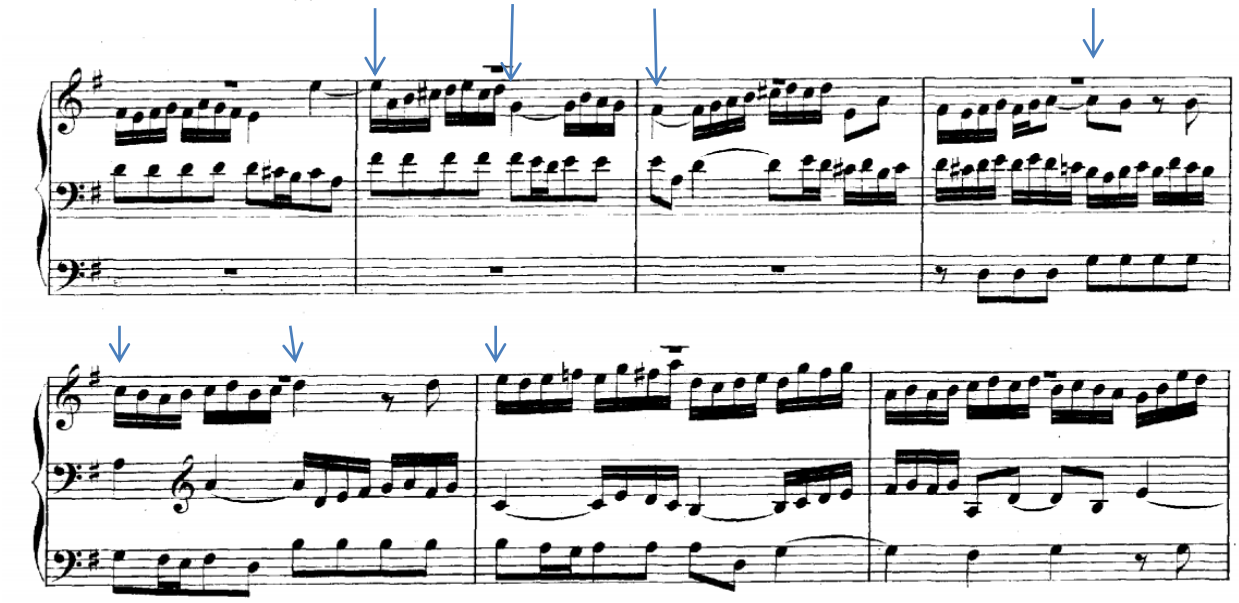
Whereas with BWV 542 (ii) the subject is clearly structured around sequential ideas, with the subject of BWV 541 (ii) the use of repetition is also of the utmost importance. To this extent, the harmonic possibilities that arise with repeated notes are considerable. Moreover, as Bach demonstrates later in the fugue, he takes fragments of the repetitions and casts them into rising and descending sequences as well as permitting the subject to undergo manifestations through related major and minor keys.

Illustration No.92 – BWV 541 (ii) – bb.1 – 4.



What appears to be a relatively straight forward subject both to hear and see on paper is actually, of all the fugal subjects so far, the one with the most potential concerning harmonic and contrapuntal complexity. When the answer form enters, Bach's intentions are clear as to how the harmonic language is beginning to veer towards a heightened level of dissonance. The design of the subject by the nature of its repetition is of course conceived so as to allow such effects.

Illustration No.93 – BWV 541 (ii) – bb.5 – 11.



The subject entries are generally speaking at a considerable distance to one another after the exposition. Tonality is nonetheless a distinctive structural design with entries in related major and minor keys.

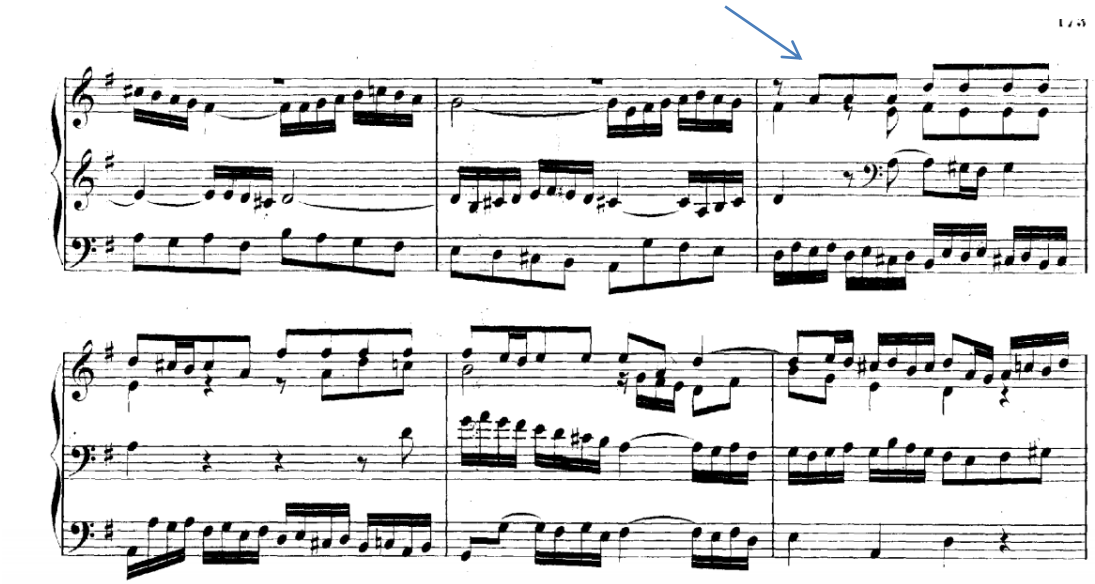
Table No.10 – The subject entries that occur throughout BWV 541 (ii).

Measure	Device	Voice
1	S	Alto
4	S – 5 (*per arsin et thesin*)	Tenor
8	S - 8	Bass (Ped.)
14	S + 5	Soprano
26	S	Alto
35	S - 3	Tenor
52	S - 11	Bass (Ped.)
59	S + 9	Soprano
66	S - 9	Bass (Ped.) Answer form
72	S - 8	Bass (Ped.)
72	S (*per arsin et thesin)*	Alto
75	S + 8 (*per arsin et thesin)*	Soprano
76	S + 4	Alto
79	S - 5	Tenor

The use of *per arsin et thesin* is apparent from the offset, with the answer form beginning just after the 3rd beat: this will be of significant structural importance further ahead. As is clear, Bach repeats the same harmonic pattern with particular emphasis on *implied* suspensions (b.6 – Soprano, b.6 – Alto, b.7 – Alto) when the pedal enters (b.8 – Soprano, b.9 – Alto, b.10 – Ped). The imitation and repetition of ideas is clearly worked out meticulously.

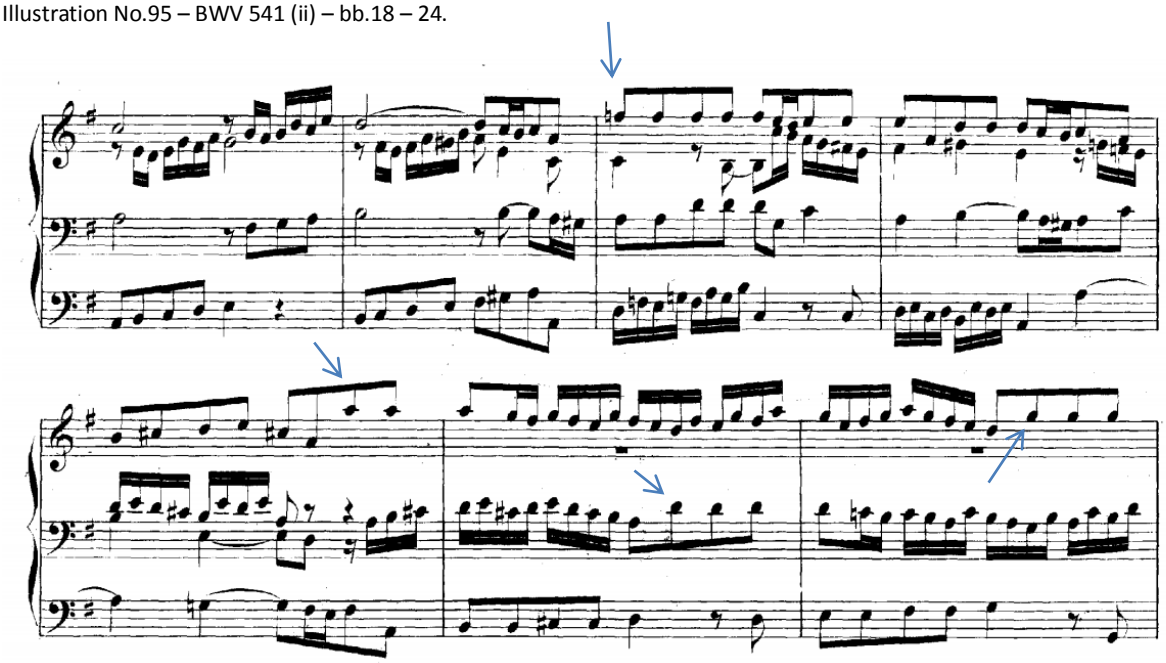
Whereas the pedal has been delayed often as the 4th voice to enter in many of the previous fugues, in this fugue it is the 3rd to enter. Similarly to BWV 536 (ii), Bach makes use of heightening the harmonic tension by allowing the 4th voice to enter in the key of the dominant (rather than using the tonal alteration). In addition, the idea of hearing the dominant as a heightened key from the tonic is proved by the running semiquavers which now take over in the pedal, which of course lend to a brief encounter of *perpetuum mobile* . It is fairly apparent that the semiquavers do not just appear for the sake of variation.

Illustration No.94 – BWV 541 (ii) – bb.11 – 16.



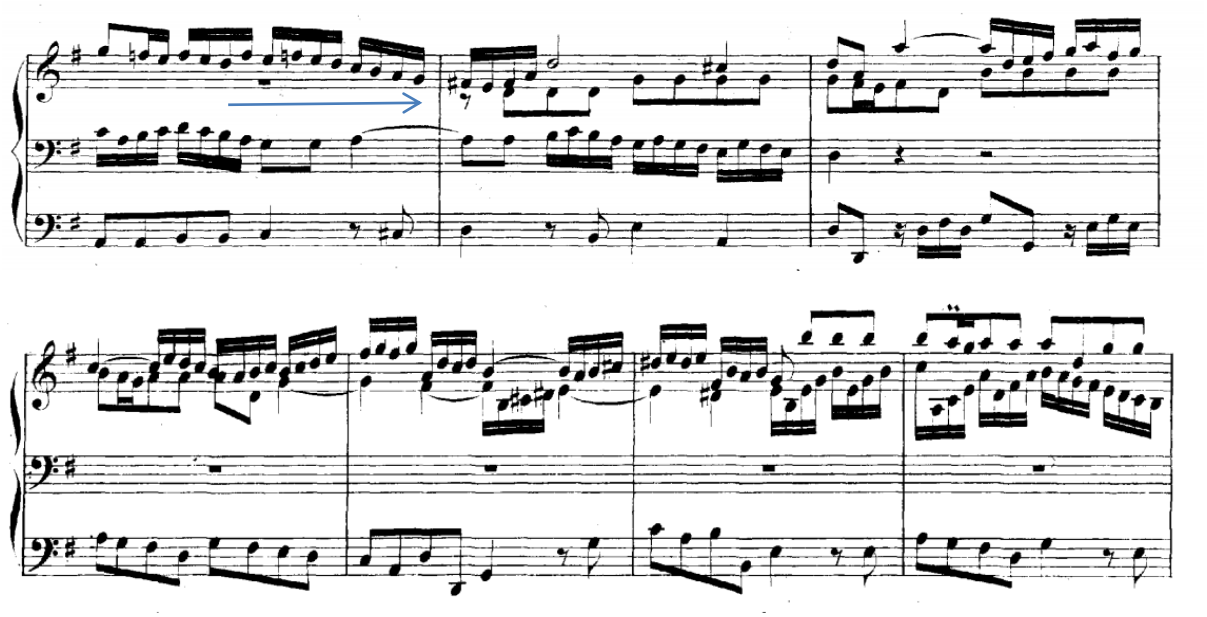
The cadence onto the dominant key (D Major) cannot be mistaken at b.16 and this marks the end of the exposition. Of all the fugues analysed so far, this is the first example whereby the dominant as a polar tonality is of great importance. It is abundantly clear from the texture that Bach intended to convey this. The extended episode between bb.18 – 25 is noteworthy, in that what appear to be subject entries are in fact fragmented forms. Beneath are four instances: none of them can be classified as false entries owing to the fact that they do not resemble the same melodic contour as the opening of the principal subject/answer form.

Illustration No.95 – BWV 541 (ii) – bb.18 – 24.



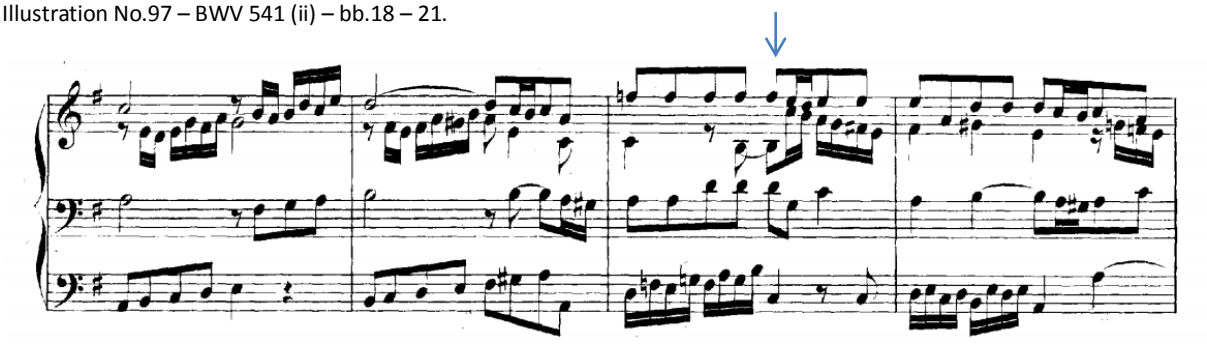
The insistent nature of the rhythm is very much central to the mobility of this episodic passage, and of course this stems directly from the subject. Even the running semiquaver passages, and fragments of these too, bear resemblance to previously encountered material. In addition, one can also witness the imitation between the soprano and tenor in b.23/24. Put simply, the episodic passages contain a lot more thematic invention and development than one might ordinarily expect. In addition, one can see the overlap in compositional traits found in BWV 541 (ii) and BWV 542 (ii). As mentioned before, Bach re-harmonises the subject to the key of the dominant utterly convincingly, and using precisely the same pitches as found for the tonic.

Illustration No.96 – BWV 541 (ii) – bb.25 – 31.



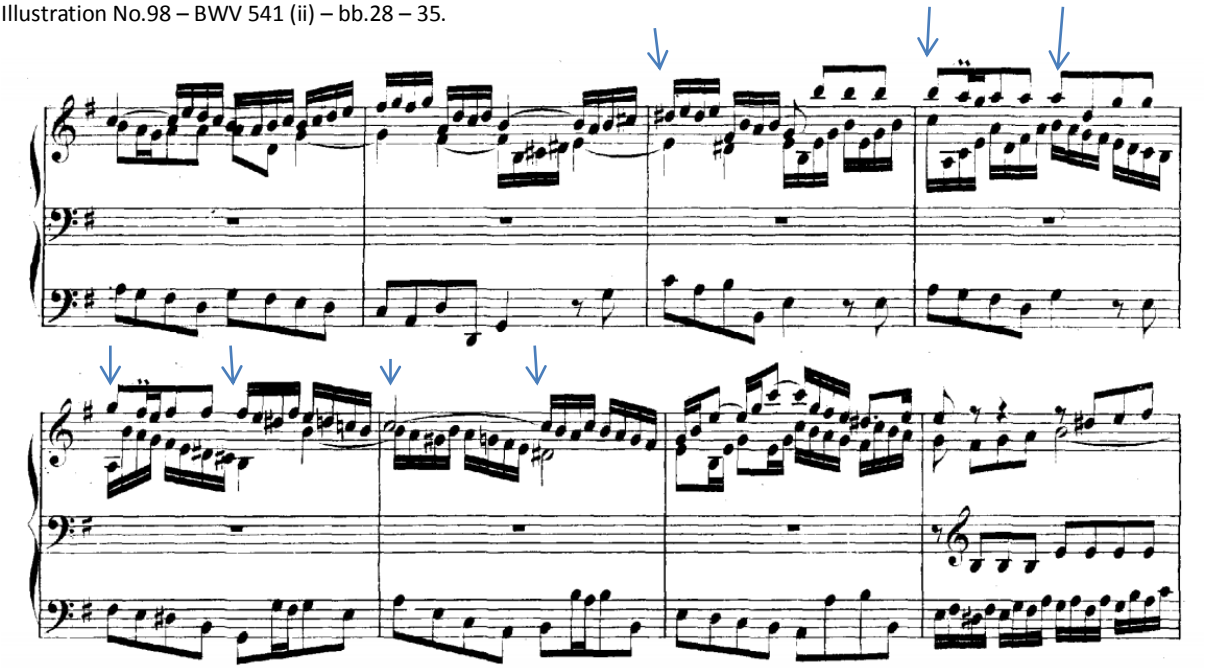
With reference to the harmonic language, Bach's use of dissonance is clearly evident. Whilst of course there are several instances of substantial dissonance, b.20 (3rd beat) proves to be more than a point in case with triple 9/7/4 suspension:

Illustration No.97 – BWV 541 (ii) – bb.18 – 21.



The expressive power of the following episodic passage bb.30 – 33 cannot be overlooked, and again Bach is not planting these suspensions merely because of design, but rather this fugue begins to take on a further dimension – harmonic rhetoric. The illustration beneath is fine example as to how Bach incorporates an artfully stage-managed modulation to the relative minor. The frequency of dissonance further adds to the compelling effectiveness and even suggests a subtle sense of poignancy through this modulation.

Illustration No.98 – BWV 541 (ii) – bb.28 – 35.



John Butt in his article *Do Musical Works Contain an Implied Listener (2010)* divides the art of listening into three separate sections: the final two are perhaps of greater relevance and are briefly summarised below –

> My second category concerns the many types of music that are specifically listener-oriented – e.g. those which purposely play on listeners' expectations and which are clearly designed with an audience in mind. This is clearly a category that is familiar from the way we might already analyse music in terms of its play on our expectations. The third type of listening might be more restricted historically (and culturally) and somehow relate to the type of listener who creates a specific sense of self over the duration of the listening experience. This would thus be something grounded in the time of the experience but which somehow overcomes its sole dependence on the linear sequence of events.[57]

[57] Butt, John, 'Do musical works contain an implied listener? Towards a theory of musical listening', in *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, (2010), p.7

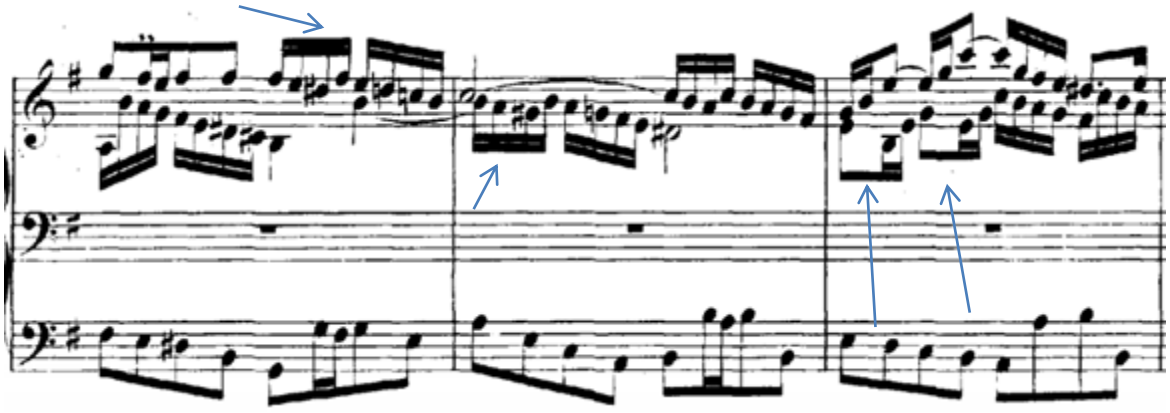
With the beginning of the mature phase in Bach's works, one can see the calculating mind at work. Each bar is meticulously worked out: each has its own purpose and schematic identity. Much of Bach's music could be compared with Leibniz's approach to metaphysics, with regards to the striving for perfection in what is a truly imperfect world. At the time treatises were well circulated with regards to the effects of consonance and dissonance. Bach knew too well the dramatic impetus which could be created by a duel between such features: it would certainly add fuel to the fugal rhetoric.

> Furthermore, Leibniz's reference to consonance and dissonance relates directly to many statements in German compositional theory, to the effect that consonances and dissonances create a 'well-sounding harmony... for the glory of God and the permissible delight of the soul'. The emotive value of dissonance is also acknowledged in the standard contrapuntal treatises of the mid-seventeenth century, by Christoph Bernhard and W. C. Printz; their writing is the immediate source for the comment by J. G. Walther, Bach's Weimar associate and cousin by marriage, that 'Dissonances are the night, consonances are the day; the light would never again be as pleasant, if it was always day and never night. Dissonances are the winter, consonances the summer. The one is bitter, the other sweet. The one is black, the other white' (Praecepta, MS 1708, book 2, chapter 4).[58]

Bach's work habit was one of practical industry and one can tell so clearly that his mind was like a sponge: he was able to absorb and incorporate ideas from so many genres, but there is still his unique fingerprint on each work. The question of procedure is clearly illustrated by how carefully even the less important passages are worked out; not one bar is wasted. Beneath is an example of a brief episodic passage: the complementary imitative counterpoint in the manuals is absolutely clear.

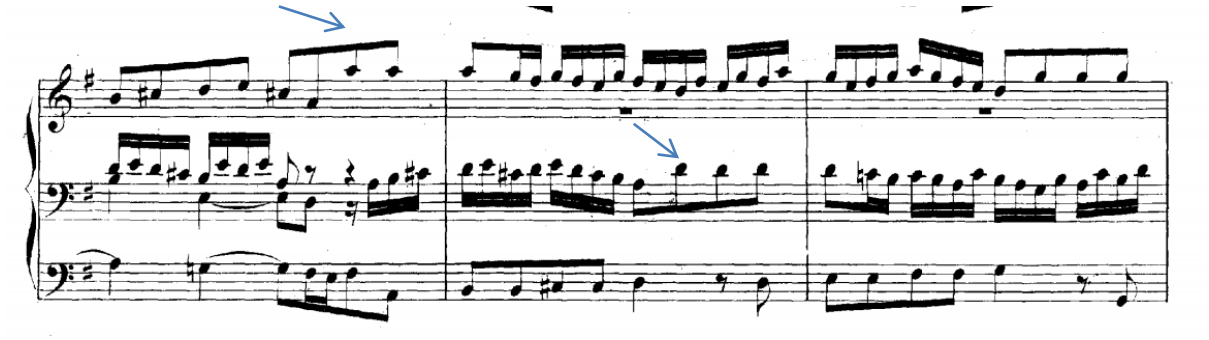
[58] Butt, John, 'A mind unconscious that is calculating' in *The Cambridge Companion to Bach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p.64

Illustration No. 99 – BWV 541 (ii) – bb. 32 – 34.



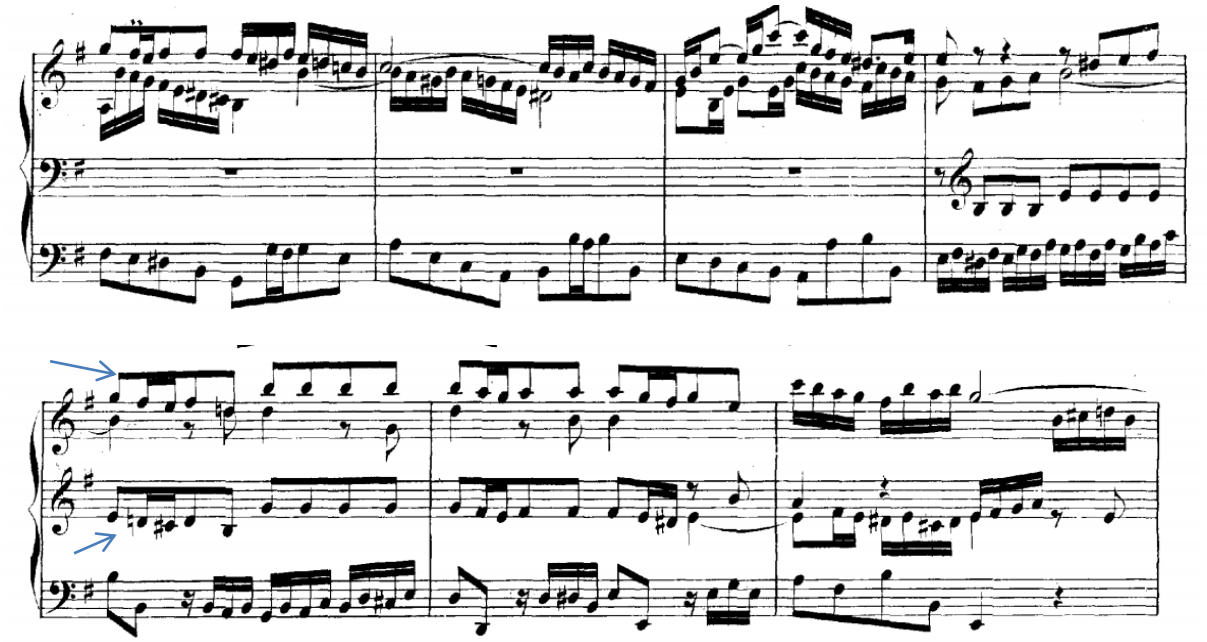
What is striking about this fugue is how few 'full' subject entries there are. Of course, there are countless suggestions of entries (see Illustration No.100), but these all take their derivation purely from the insistent rhythmic nature, not the melodic contour. Thus, they cannot be termed 'false' entries as they are extracts of the idea.

Illustration No. 100 – BWV 541 (ii) – bb.22 – 24.



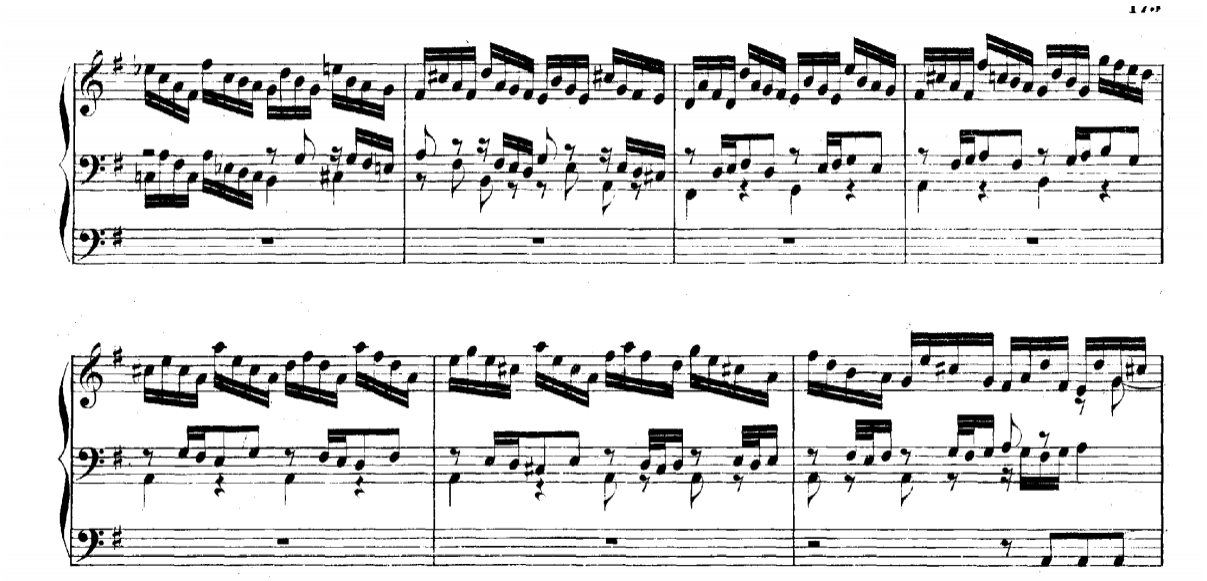
Indeed, in this fugue, Bach reserves full subject entries only to highlight the passing modulations to related keys. The modulation to the relative minor is of particular interest. Not only does it feature the return of the running semiquavers in the pedal but also, Bach doubles the entry at the interval of an alternating compound major / minor 3rd in the soprano from b.36 (Illustration No.101 – overleaf).

Illustration No. 101 – BWV 541 (ii) – bb.32 – 38.



Whereas until now the dominant has only been briefly passed through at the end of the exposition, the preparation for a full entry in the dominant is considerably lengthy. It is of no structural coincidence that the longest episodic passage occurs between bb.35 – 52, in anticipation of the dominant. There are three notable features in this lengthy episode. Firstly, the reduction in texture to quasi-three-part counterpoint. Secondly, the use of the sustained 'A' pedal. Thirdly, the meticulous inner workings of the quasi-three-part counterpoint.

Illustration No. 102 – BWV 541 (ii) – bb.46 – 52.



The above extract provides all the evidence needed to address those three points. The reduction in texture is immediately apparent – broken chords in the right hand and melodic fragments in the left

hand, with the pedal note as the anchor. The so-called 'melodic fragments' again reveal the calculating mind at work: 1) a rising pattern 2) the melodic inversion 3) rhythmic diminution. The diagrams beneath illustrate each in turn.

Illustration No.103 a) – BWV 541 (ii) – bb.46 – 49.

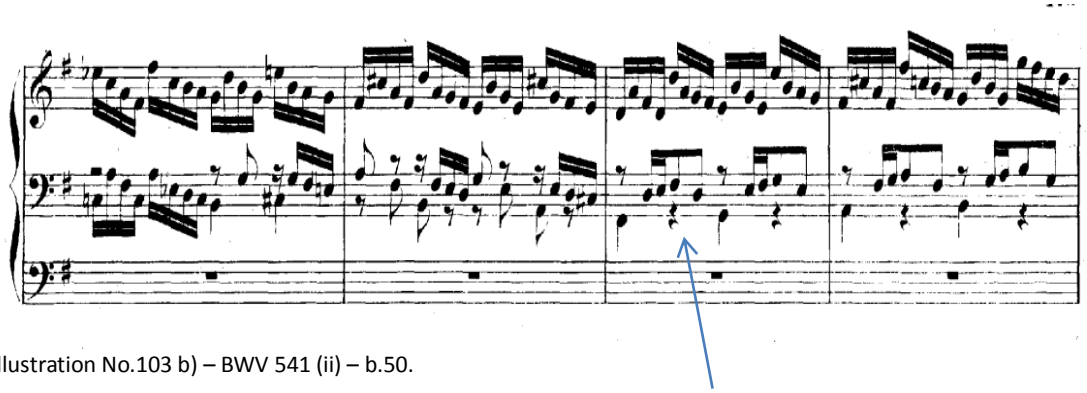


Illustration No.103 b) – BWV 541 (ii) – b.50.

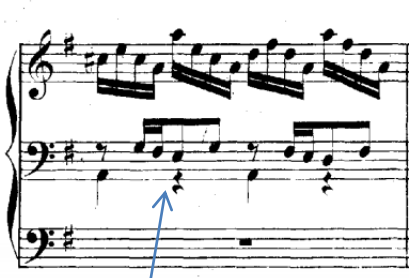
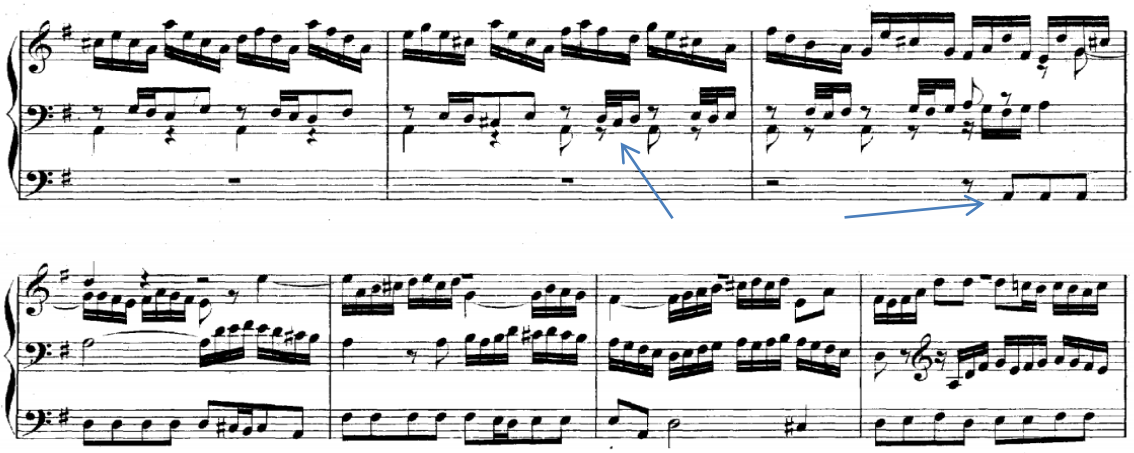
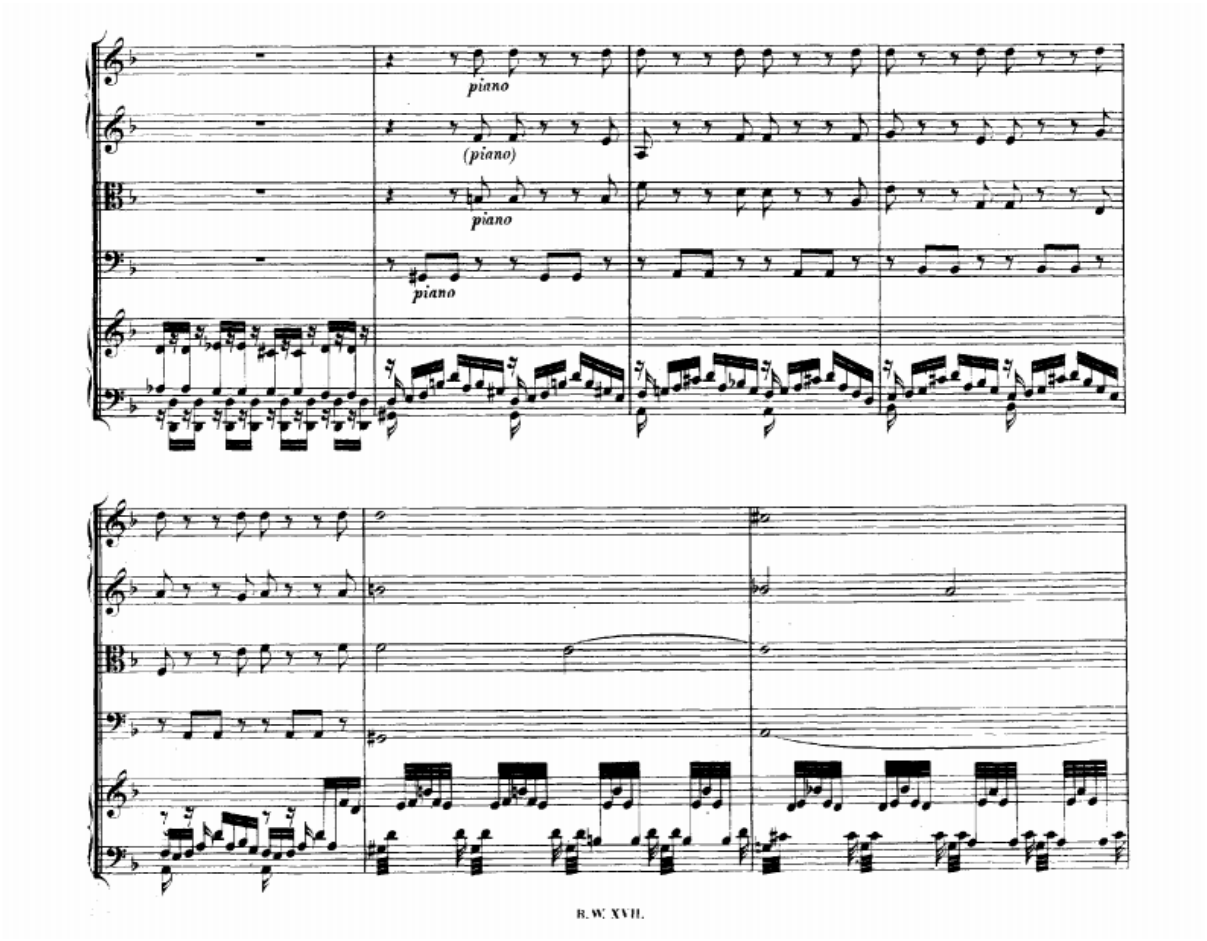


Illustration No. 103 c) – BWV 541 (ii) – bb.50 – 52.



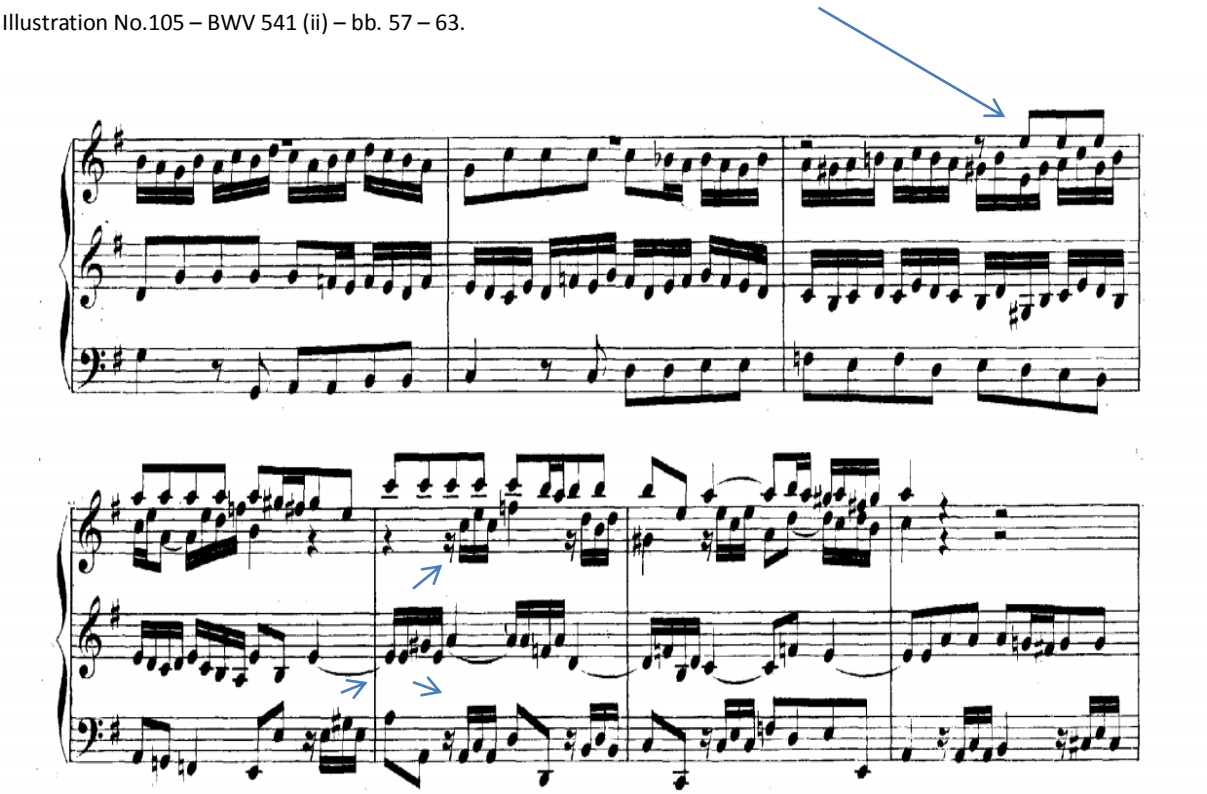
The preparation for a full subject statement in the dominant at b.52 is so unmistakeable and without doubt firmly establishes the idea of interpreting the fugal subject as a *ritornello*. To this extent, this fugue can be seen as *ritornello* concerto form, with the subject treated as the main *ritornello* kernel. It is not a fugue which exhibits contrapuntal complexity in its treatment of the subject, except for the cadenza which will be dealt with in due course. To further strengthen this argument, one needs to only examine the lengthy anticipatory passage of the final *ritornello* anticipating the tonic in the D Minor Keyboard Concerto: the similarities of texture and inner pedal lines are striking.

Illustration No.104 – BWV 1052 (i) – bb.161 – 174.



One of the most sublime passages of contrapuntal architecture not only concerning the subject (this time heralding the Dominant minor of the Dominant – A Minor) but also the antiphonal display with the lower voices is remarkable from its aspect of precision. On paper the patterns are too clear to go unmissed and yet musically, one flows so effortlessly into the other. It is interesting also to note the beginnings of Bach's command of making harmony ambiguous – one almost expects F Major but purely by introducing the G Sharp at b.59, he then plunges in the direction of A Minor.

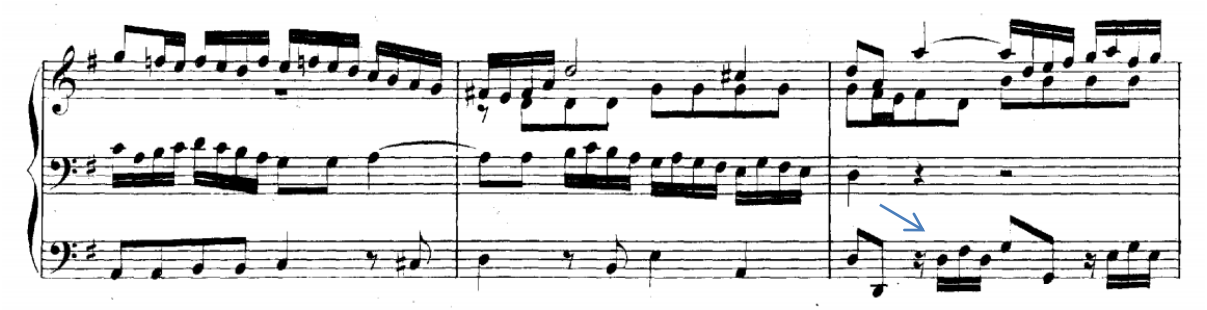
Illustration No.105 – BWV 541 (ii) – bb. 57 – 63.



The polyphony between bb.60 - 62 is admirable as the voices prolifically answer one another and this, as an accompanying texture aside from the subject in the soprano, is fulfilling in itself. The attention to detail is thus considerable for what many other composers would simply regard as the accompanying texture.

Thereafter, the rhythmic insistence in the pedal beginning in earnest from b.60 through until the end of b.65 can all be traced back to a motif first encountered in the pedal at b.27.

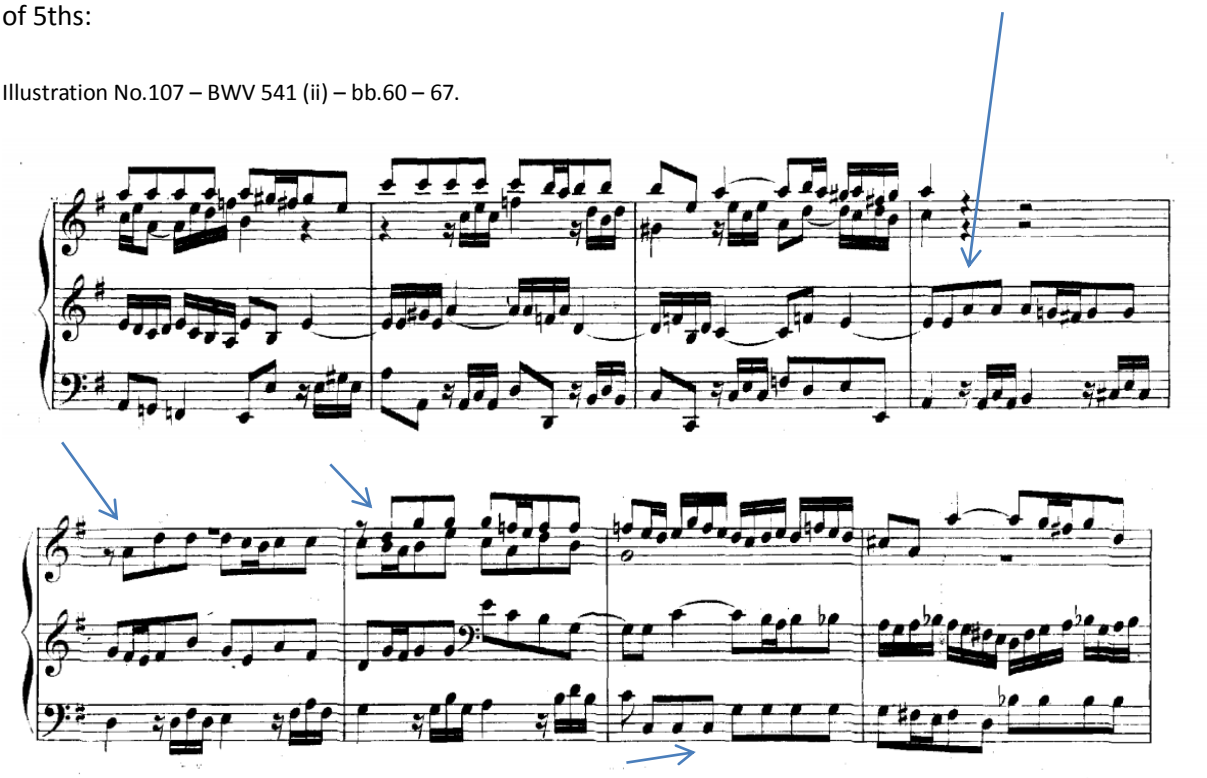
Illustration No.106 – BWV 541 (ii) – bb.25 – 27.



Without doubt, its purpose is two - fold. Namely, it is creating a sense of expectation not only through the use of the *suspirans* and using rising sequence but also, it is anticipating a harmonic diversion which is ultimately delivered in b.66 by means of a subject entry in the tonic minor – G minor.

However, what precedes this is of perhaps greater interest as the mechanics anticipate what is then to occur in the cadenza albeit on a much larger scale. A brief examination of bb.63 – 65 will reveal a *stretto* using the opening fragment of the subject which is harmonically structured around the cycle of 5ths:

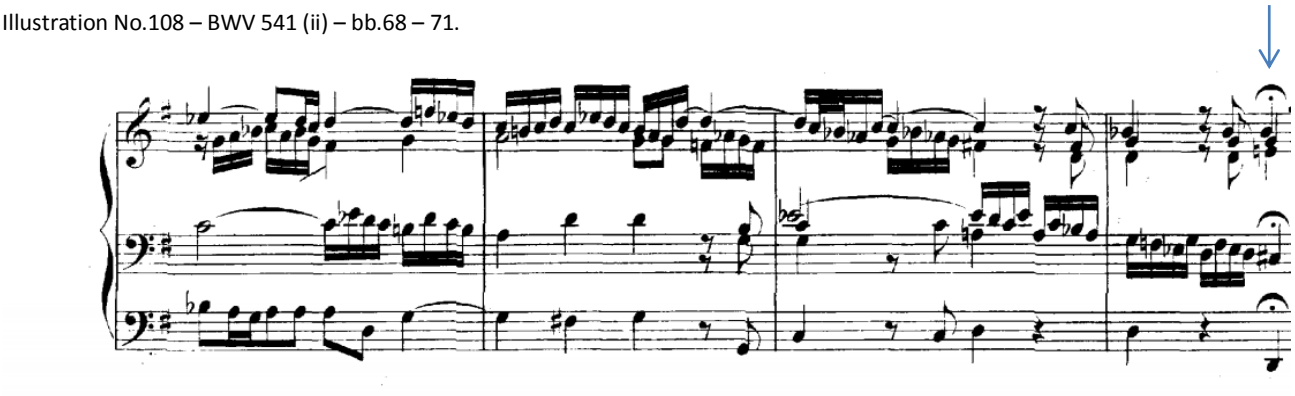
Illustration No.107 – BWV 541 (ii) – bb.60 – 67.



What is of course of striking interest is the occurrence of the subject in the tonic minor (albeit in answer form using the rising 5th) – rarely do fugues exhibit this level of tonal ambiguity particularly towards the recapitulation. Subsequently, Bach moves further away from expectations passing

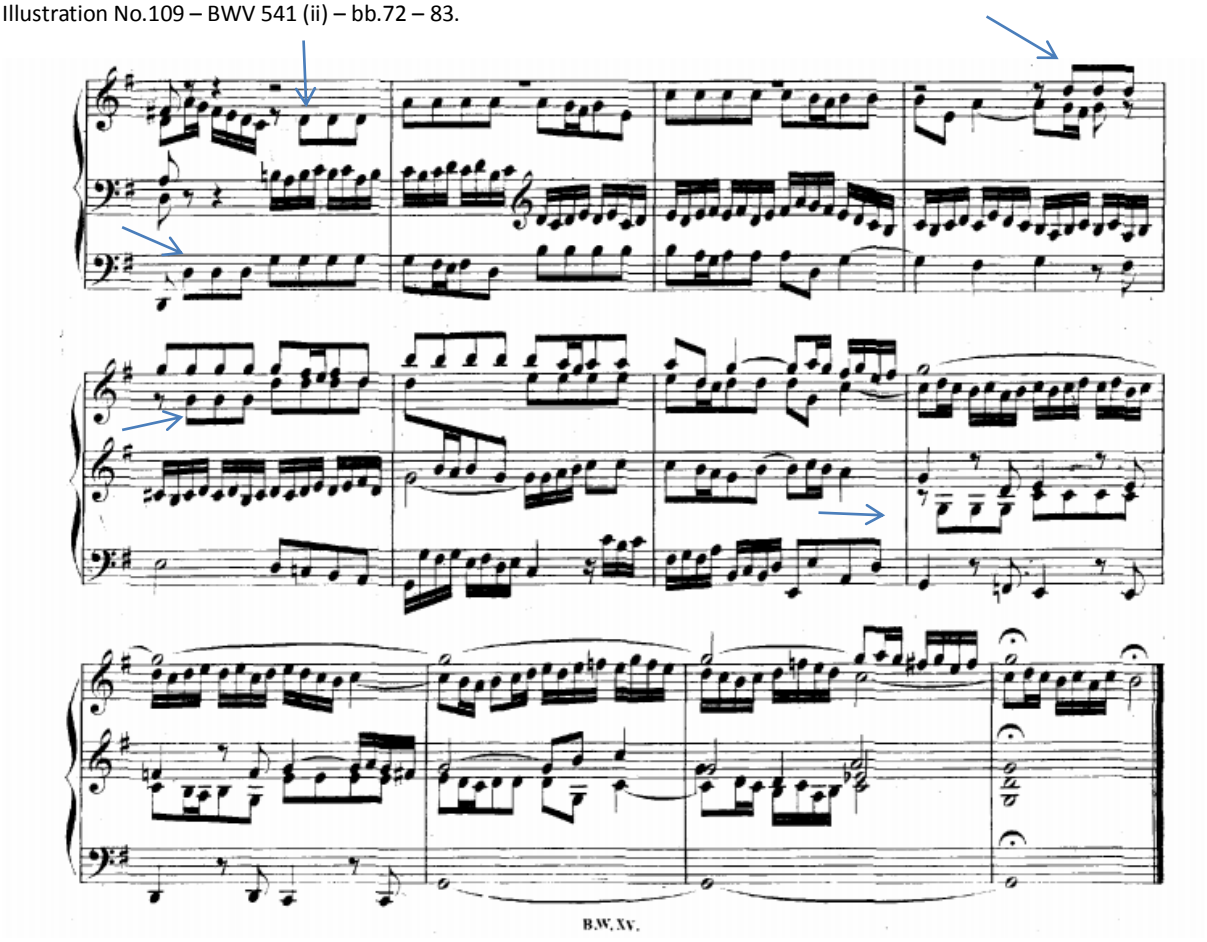
through the tonic minor and the subsequent related keys arriving at caesura comprising a diminished seventh on C –Sharp over a pedal D.

Illustration No.108 – BWV 541 (ii) – bb.68 – 71.



Whereas until now, the quick succession of subject entries and their invertibility has been avoided, Bach reserves this as an exhibition for what is seemingly a cadenza. It is not a cadenza in the sense that the soloist is designed to be showcased but rather, it takes the literal sense of the word with regards to its etymology – *cado* – to fall. It is a fall from the dominant ultimately to the tonic. It is as though a small set of dominoes is falling with each subject entry representing the falling process.

Illustration No.109 – BWV 541 (ii) – bb.72 – 83.



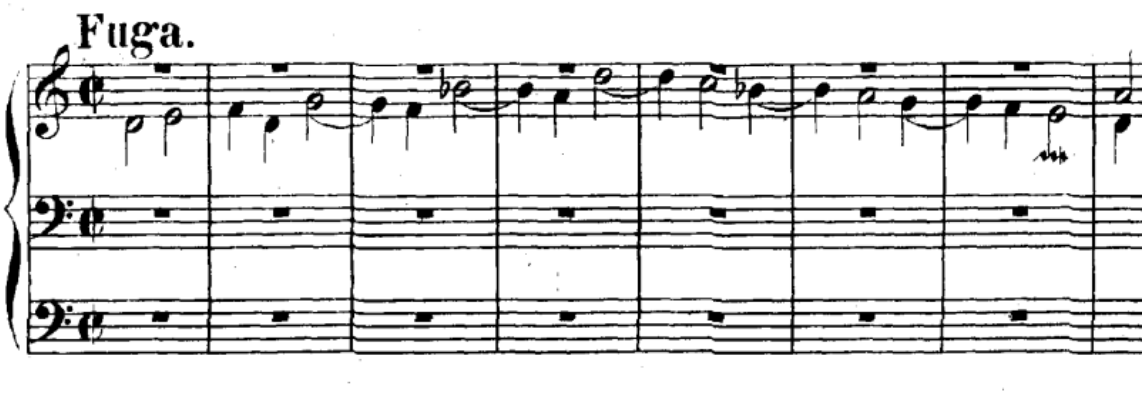
It is curious to observe that the final subject entry at b.79 is in the key of the subdominant major (C Major) – there is no instance of a clear final statement to be found in the tonic. Moreover, the entire cadenza is void of a decisive and definitive perfect cadence – the prolongation is maintained throughout. Consequently, this fugue represents a substantial range of what some would consider fugal anomalies. The emphasis has frequently been transferred to the meticulously woven counterpoint surrounding the ritornello entries of the subject. Moreover, the cadenza is reserved as the opportune arena for contrapuntal complexity. Above all, it undeniably exhibits Bach's reinterpretation and casting of fugue as a compositional medium that is to become malleable in so many contexts.

CHAPTER 7

Fugue in D Minor – BWV 538 (ii) - A More Profound Inner Complexity

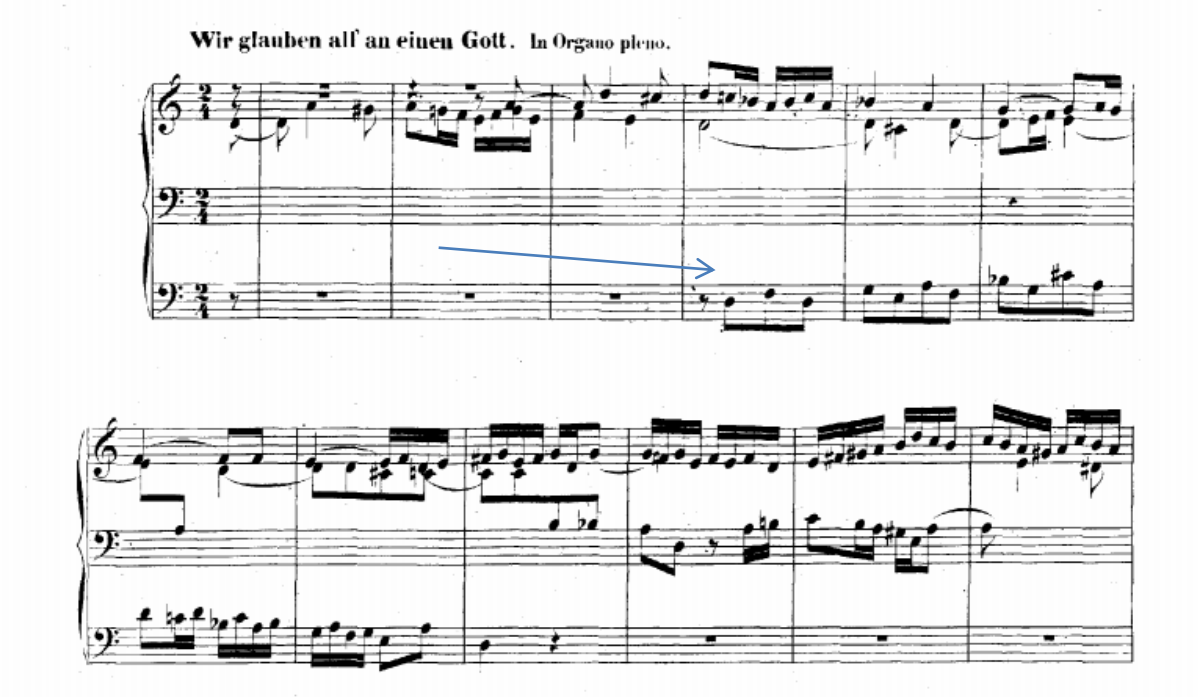
The so-called 'Dorian' Fugue possesses arguably the most elegiac of all Bach's fugal subjects in the organ repertoire. Beside its deference to antiquity, its rhythmical formulae and style has a distinct resemblance to a *ricercare*. The significance regarding solely the design of the subject is not to be found through any form of numerological riddles within the note values or deliberately implied religious symbolisms but rather by the overall contour and meaning of the ascent followed by the descent. It is evident that the shape of the subject (in whichever key then prevailing) provides more than a fragment of expressive intention.

Illustration No.110 – BWV 538 (ii) – bb.1 – 8.



The melodic compass is clearly contained within the octave (D to D) but it is how Bach manoeuvres from the two notes, both ascending and descending, which is of substantial interest. One overarching feature is the use of sequence. Bach knew of the boundless contrapuntal systematic procedures which could be derived from a coherently constructed sequential subject. The use of syncopation throughout this subject leads to two effects. Firstly, throughout the ascent, the impression of a short breath is suggested before each rise of a perfect 4^{th}: the higher it ascends, the greater the effect of the yearning (the importance of singing, which Bach taught, is absolutely crucial with understanding the melodic intent). Secondly, the effect by descent having reached the 'D' is though the voice is slightly stuttering and becomes more reticent as it descends. Of perhaps equal importance, a comparison is made with the ostinato in the pedal from the setting of *Wir Gläuben all an einen Gott* (BWV 680) in *Clavier Übung III*. It is perhaps not a coincidence that both works are in the same key and have implied modal harmonies. However, upon closer analysis, one can clearly see an overlap in the melodic idea which characterises the subject for BWV 538 (ii) and the ostinato for BWV 680. This question of rising and falling is again not a coincidence.

Illustration No.111 – BWV 680 – bb. 1 – 12.



The aspect of ascent followed by descent is a highly unusual one; indeed, it is unique within the canon of Bach's fugal subjects in the organ works. Putting this question of ascent and descent into context and extracting an explanation, it is arguable that the overall rising contour in BWV 538 (ii) in the first half is symbolic of man striving to achieve perfection, but ultimately mankind is subject to shortfalls in life: man returns from whence he came. Also, it is possibly of no coincidence that there are 'three' differing statements of rising fourths, thereby depicting a possible belief in the trinity (Trinitarian and other religious symbolism was to be of profound influence in Bach's works as the subsequent analyses of latter fugues will reveal). This may be a potent reading into the meaning of the subject but one which cannot be ignored given Bach's devout Lutheran background. *Ipso facto* the significance of *similar* melodic features and indeed the outline as an ostinato in BWV 680 cannot be ignored given the liturgical importance – the Creed itself. Bach incorporated a wealth of symbolism in his music and one should interpret this in conjunction with his faith. It is also overwhelmingly apparent that the construction of any fugal subject by Bach is constructed with meticulous attention. Whilst the above will never be proven from a symbolic perspective, it is not merely a coincidence that both possess similar hallmarks and that Bach used a similar melodic outline and construction to depict Christian faith in his setting of the Creed.

Whilst no autograph manuscript survives, this work is often cited as belonging to the 'Weimar Period of 1708-17'. Sadly, this is of little help. What is of greater help is that this fugue bears some structural similarities to that of BWV 542 (ii) from at least the perspective of triple invertible counterpoint - a subject with two regular countersubjects maintained throughout a considerable proportion of the fugue. Moreover, if one examines some of the other 'Weimar' organ fugues such as BWV 550 (ii) or BWV 532 (ii), the inner complexity and polyphonic command is at times considerably less intricate. As the table beneath illustrates, there is a far greater density of subject entries through related major and minor keys. Several also appear in canon with one another.

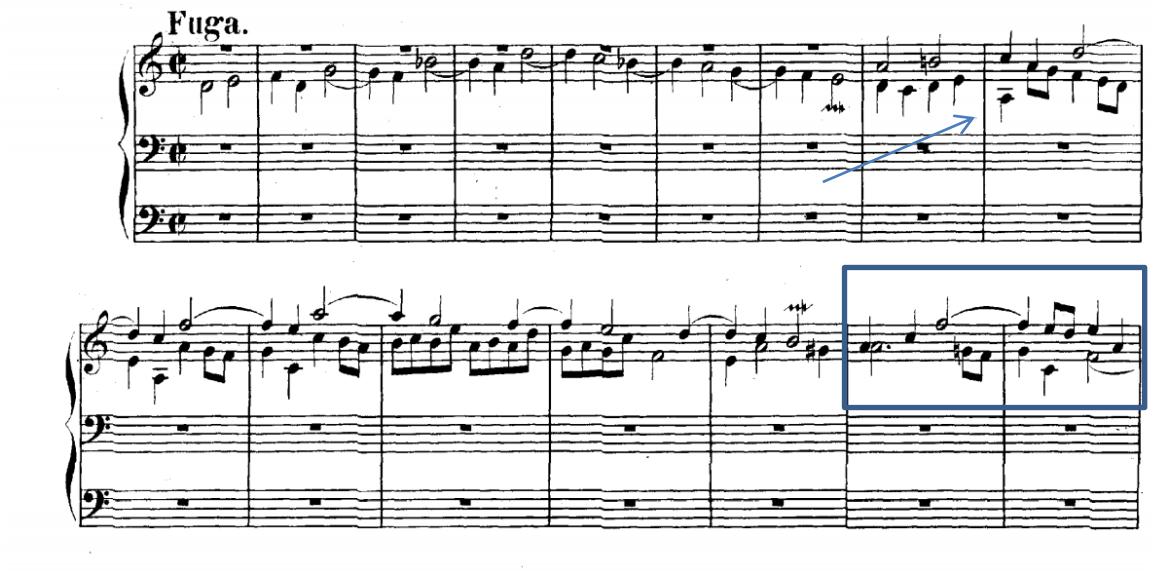
Table No .11 - The subject entries throughout BWV 538 (ii).

Measure	Device	Voice
1	S	Alto
8	S + 5	Soprano
9	C/S	Alto
18	S - 8	Tenor
19	C/S + 4	Soprano
19	C/S (ii)	Alto
29	S - 11	Bass (Ped.)
30	C/S - 8	Tenor
30	C/S (ii) + 5	Soprano
43	S - 4	Alto
58	S + 3	Soprano
71	S - 11	Bass
72	C/S + 8	Soprano
72	C/S (ii) - 4	Tenor
81	S - 15	Bass (Ped.)
82	C/S - 5	Alto
82	C/S (ii) - 8	Tenor
101	S + 3	Soprano
102	S - 13	Bass (Ped.)
115	S - 2	Tenor
130	S + 4	Alto
131	S - 5	Tenor
146	S - 10	Tenor

150	C/S (Fragment)	Alto
150	C/S (ii) (Fragment)	Soprano
167	S - 15	Bass (Ped.)
168	S	Alto
188	S + 5	Soprano
188	C/S - 8	Tenor
203	S	Soprano
204	S - 15	Bass (Ped.)
207	C/S (Fragment)	Tenor
207	C/S (ii) (Fragment)	Alto

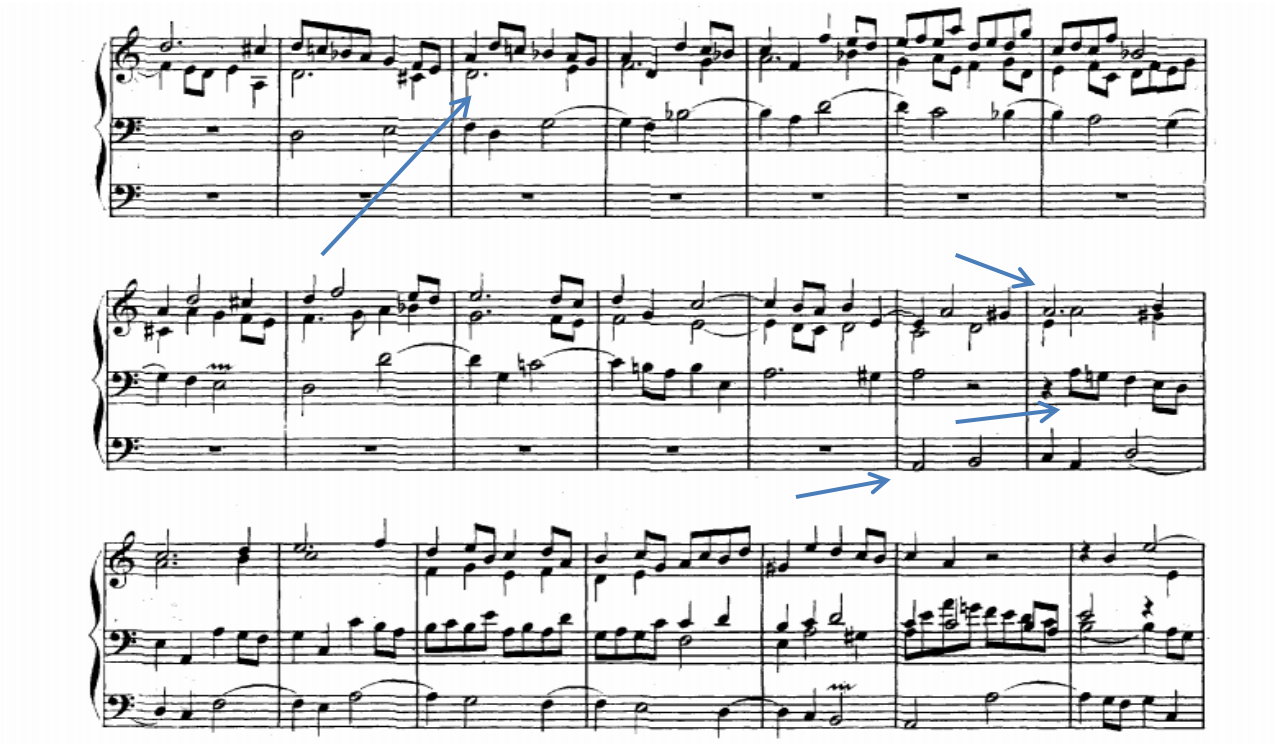
With the entry of the answer form at b.8 in the soprano, the counter subject does not begin in earnest (that is to say what becomes the recognisable recurring feature) until b.9 in the alto.

Illustration No.112 – BWV 538 (ii) – bb. 1 – 16.



The bridge passage occurring at b.15, (see Illustration No.112) which makes prolific use of imitation between the two voices, also becomes a recurring feature throughout many of the bridge passages and episodes which subsequently follow. Remarkably, Bach lays out all his thematic ideas in a very short time frame at the beginning of the work: so much is derived out of so little. With the third subject entry, the 2nd countersubject is introduced in the alto at b.19. The full context of the triple invertibility can be seen clearly when the pedal enters at b.29

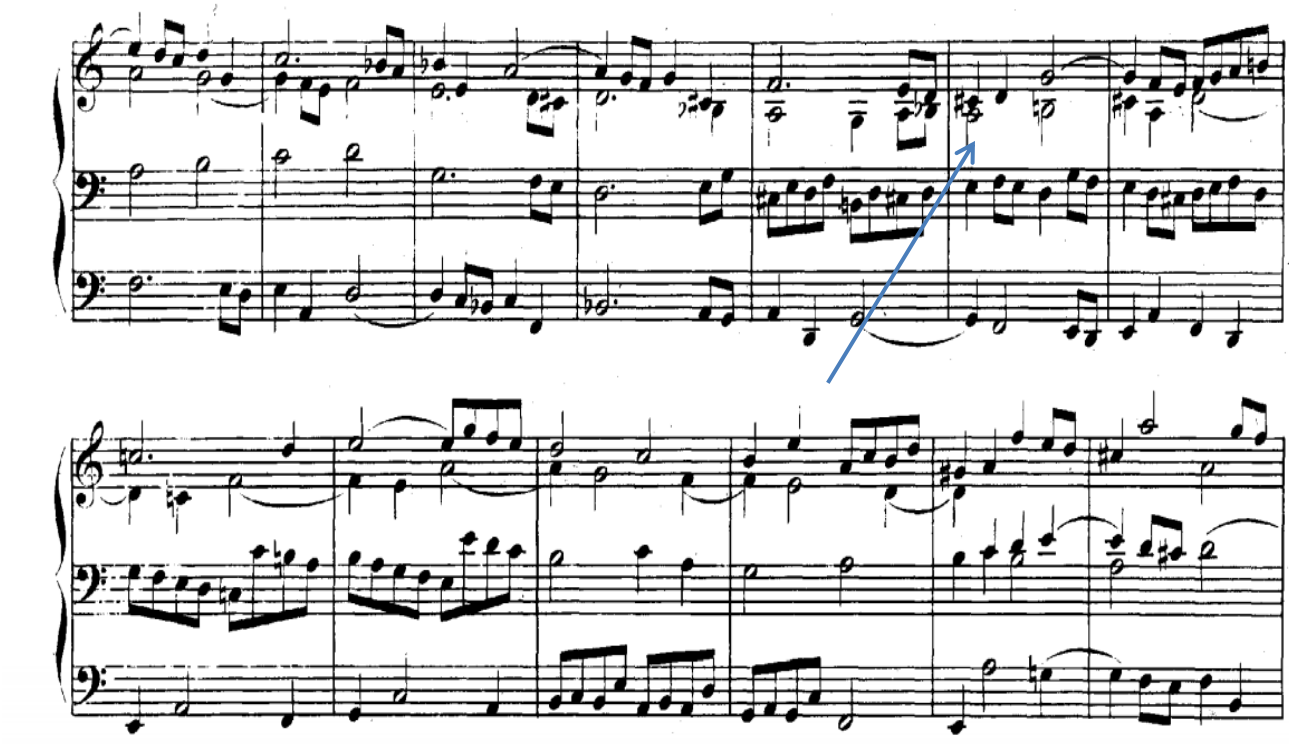
Illustration No.113 – BWV 538 (ii) – bb. 17 – 37.



The carefully-constructed nature of the exposition is immediately apparent by the way the three distinctive thematic ideas interlock and interact. Moreover, as will be apparent throughout the entire fugue, Bach almost deliberately conceals the entries of subjects; almost to the extent that he intended them to be elusive (indeed one of the satisfactions of an analysis of this fugue is being able to locate them). In each fugue analysed so far, the subjects have been, to a large extent, relatively conspicuous in terms of their location and prominence, invariably because fugal entries have been largely associated with cadential coincidence. Here, however, the focus of fugal entries now turns to the art of subtlety and legerdemain. The following two entries reflect the subtlety, and show two fundamental methods and examples by which this is achieved. The third method, the use of canon, will be dealt with latterly.

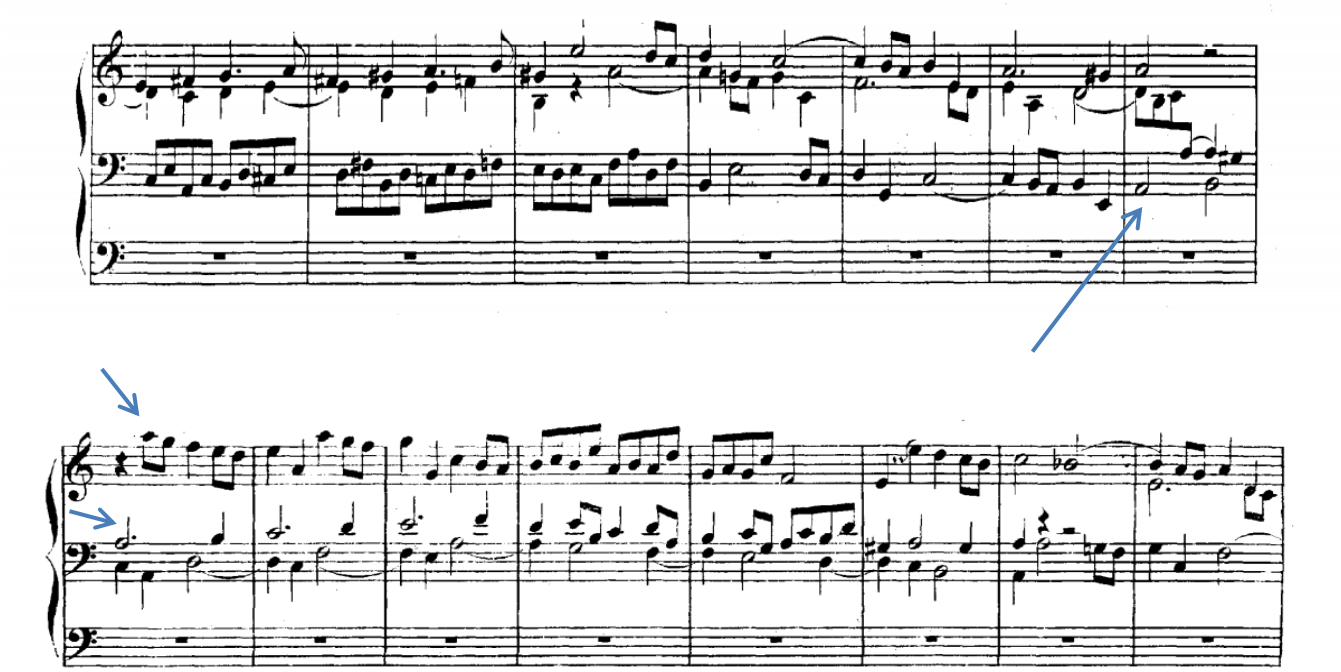
The first method and example (b.43) makes particular use of inner voice concealment. The texture between the soprano, alto and tenor is very close, and this makes it quite challenging to discern the clear arrival of the subject. In addition, there is no distinctive cadence which helps to identify the entry.

Illustration No.114 – BWV 538 (ii) - bb.38 – 50.



The second method and example (b.71) draws upon the human instinct and art of distraction. The ear is automatically drawn to what might seem not only the more attractive melodic feature, but also what is easier to interpret. The counter melody which occurs from b.72 is of course the 1st countersubject, but because the tessitura is in the higher limit of the soprano, this is what is more apparent to the ear. Thus, the question of psychological significance is brought to the forefront here and the music is playing upon the human intellect.

Illustration No.115 – BWV 538 (ii) – bb.65 – 79.



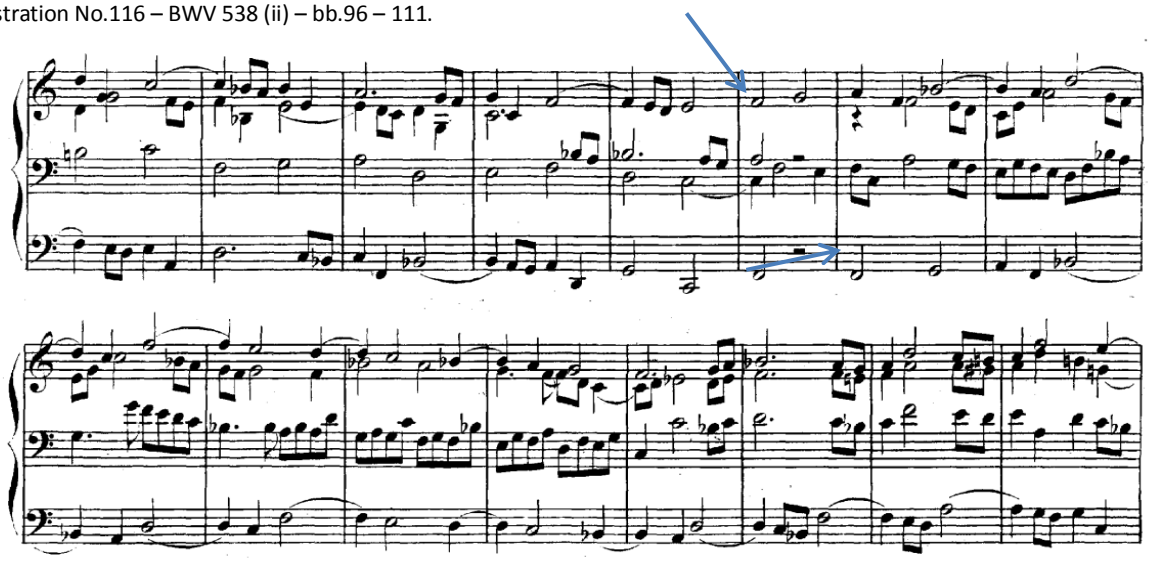
The music theorist Martin Fuhrmann, who heard Bach play in Leipzig in the late 1720s and lavished praise on him for his mastery of the keyboard, believed that musicians could look forward to joining the heavenly concert after their deaths. For Furhmann the eternal symphony would certainly be polyphonic, and the unsurpassable richness of these celestial sonorities would make the terrestrial music recently left behind by the newly arriving musicians seem monophonic by comparison.[59]

The third style which Bach makes prolific use of is that of canon. To Bach's mind, heaven was about order. If he could somehow portray order and logic within his music, but at the same time create an unsurpassable sense of beauty, this was how Heaven or at least a representation of celestial order could be depicted in music. In many ways canon as a supreme contrapuntal discipline, and one predicated on Bach's admiration for the technique of his predecessors, lies at the epicentre of this archaic fugal design. Beneath are three examples of purely subject entries (all in differing keys) presented in canon at the distance of one bar.

[59] Yearsley, David, *Bach and meanings of counterpoint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) p.30

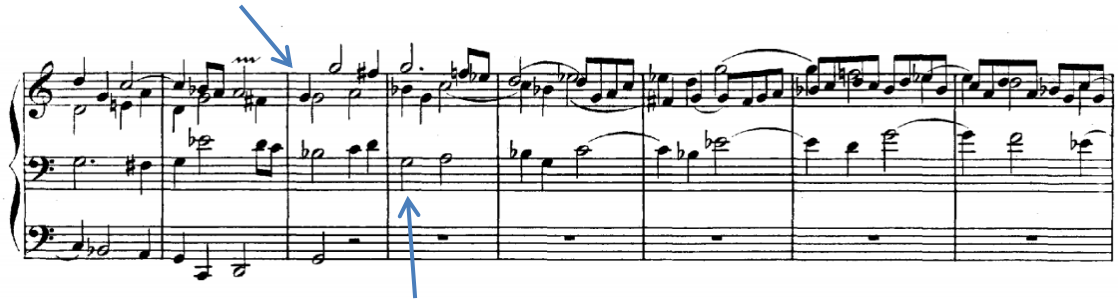
(F Major)

Illustration No.116 – BWV 538 (ii) – bb.96 – 111.



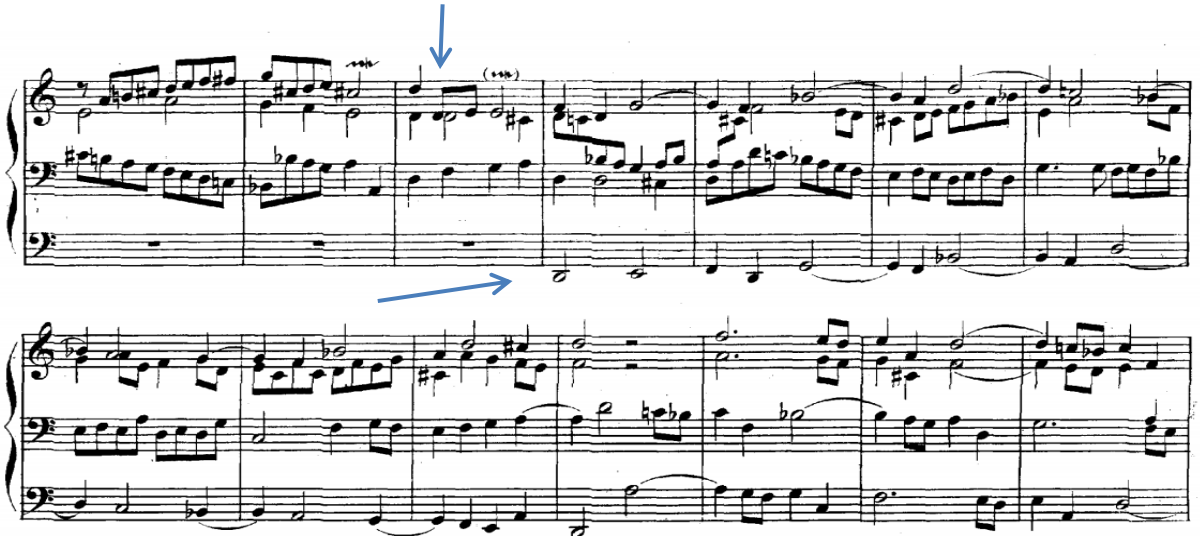
(G Minor)

Illustration No.117 – BWV 538 (ii) – bb.128 – 135.



(D Minor)

Illustration No.118 – BWV 538 (ii) – bb.201 – 214.



Whilst the specific details of harmony will be dealt with subsequently, there are three integral reasons for using canon at the fundamental tonal subject entries. Firstly, it is an exhibition of contrapuntal skill and discipline. Secondly, although perhaps sentimental, it could be a graphic depiction of union – J.S. Bach and his late wife Maria Barbara Bach (d.1720) following one another. Thus, husband and wife are following one another in union, albeit not during the remainder of J.S. Bach's earthly life. Although there is no documented evidence for such an idea, it should not be refuted given Bach's Lutheran background and the conveyance of imagery. Thirdly, the devotion towards God and the depiction of Heavenly order cannot be underestimated. [60]

Illustration No.119 – The Frontispiece of *Musurgia Universalis* (1650) – Athanasius Kircher.

[60] Athanasius Kircher's Musurgia Universalis (1650) was a well - known publication and whilst the contents of J.S. Bach's library were never listed, C.P.E. Bach certainly had it in his possession and thus is likely to have inherited it from J.S. Bach.

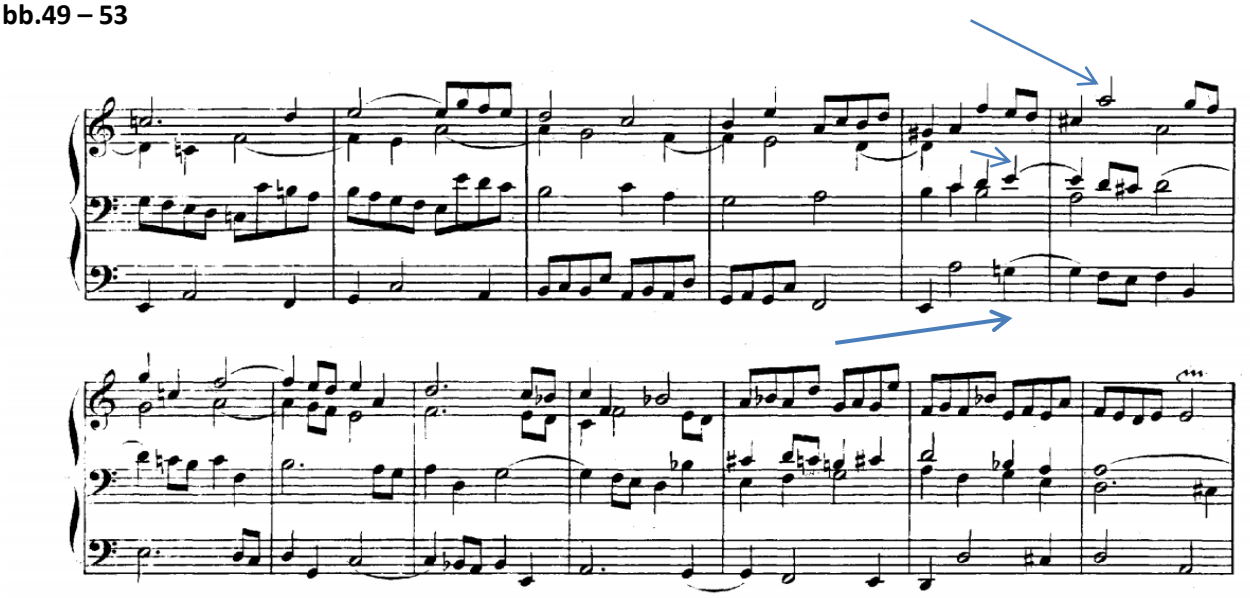
And since God was concerned primarily with order in disposing of the universe then it was entirely appropriate that the heavens should resound with the most orderly of music – strict counterpoint – as the frontispiece to the *Musurgia* so extravagantly shows. In heaven – high above the underworld and the earth, two angels carry a banner displaying a thirty six voice canon for nine choruses of four voices. Seated in the lower left hand corner is Pythagoras, the discoverer of the proportions of the universe and the most successful researcher into God's order.[61]

As David Yearsley suggests, the question of regular invertible counterpoint through its meaning of systematic interlocking would have appealed to Bach as a depiction of order and a direct correlation with the Heavenly realm. Moreover, canon and its use represented the apotheosis of contrapuntal control. It is not surprising therefore that some of Bach's last works for keyboard published in the 1740s (*Von Himmel Hoch Canonic Variations BWV 769, The Fourteen Canons on the Goldberg Ground BWV 1087, Four Canons on the Art of Fugue Subject BWV 1080 and the Musical Offering BWV 1079*) contain some of the most sophisticated canons known to mankind.

In BWV 538 (ii), whilst canon is used for highlighting subject entries, it is also used systematically throughout the episodes between all of the voices. Whilst the episodes are not fully independent canons which stand by themselves in isolation, canon as a form of imitative counterpoint is nonetheless readily apparent. Beneath are three brief examples all taken from differing episodes but nonetheless all using the same initial thematic idea located in b.15:

Illustration No.120 – BWV 538 (ii) – bb.45 – 57.

bb.49 – 53



[61] Yearsley, David, *Bach and meanings of counterpoint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) p.21

Illustration No.121 – BWV 538 (ii) – bb.120 – 135.

bb.124 – 129

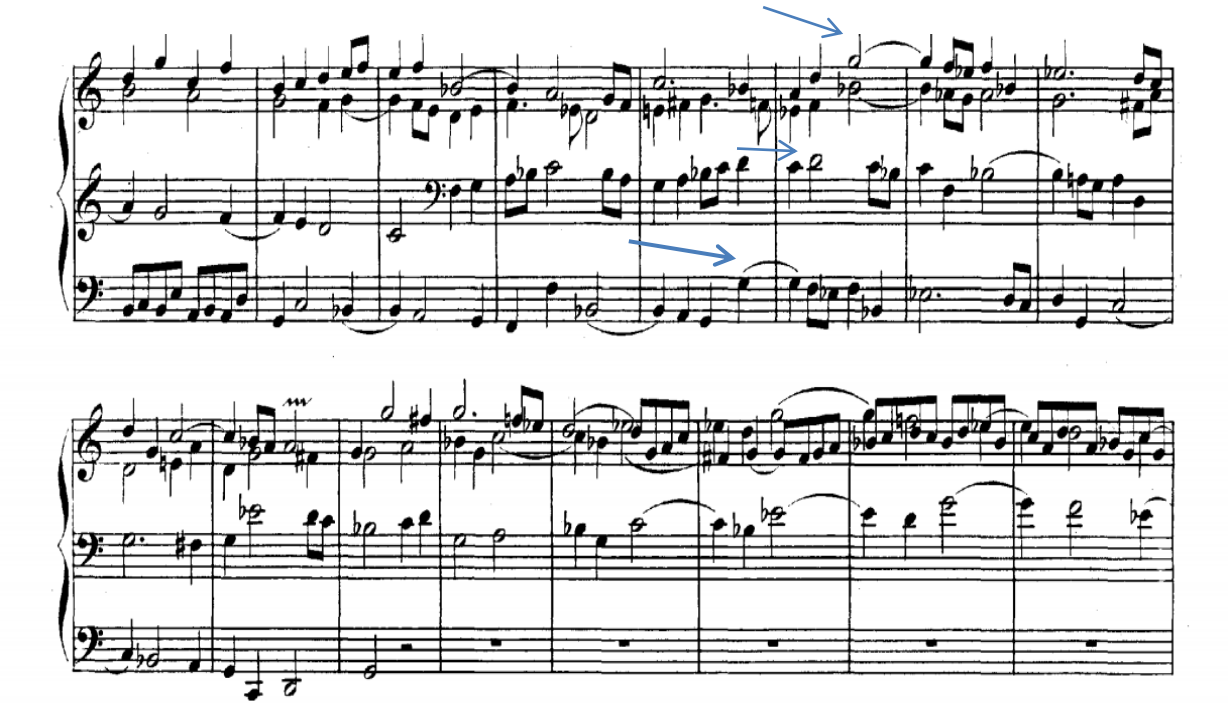
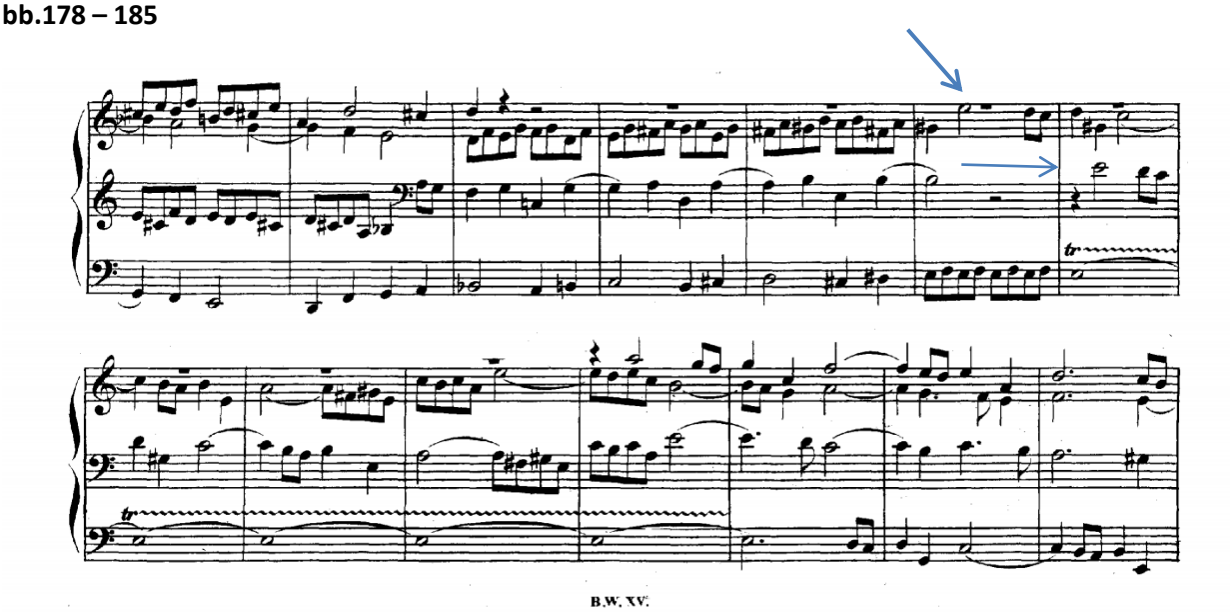


Illustration No.122 – BWV 538 (ii) – bb. 173 – 186.

bb.178 – 185



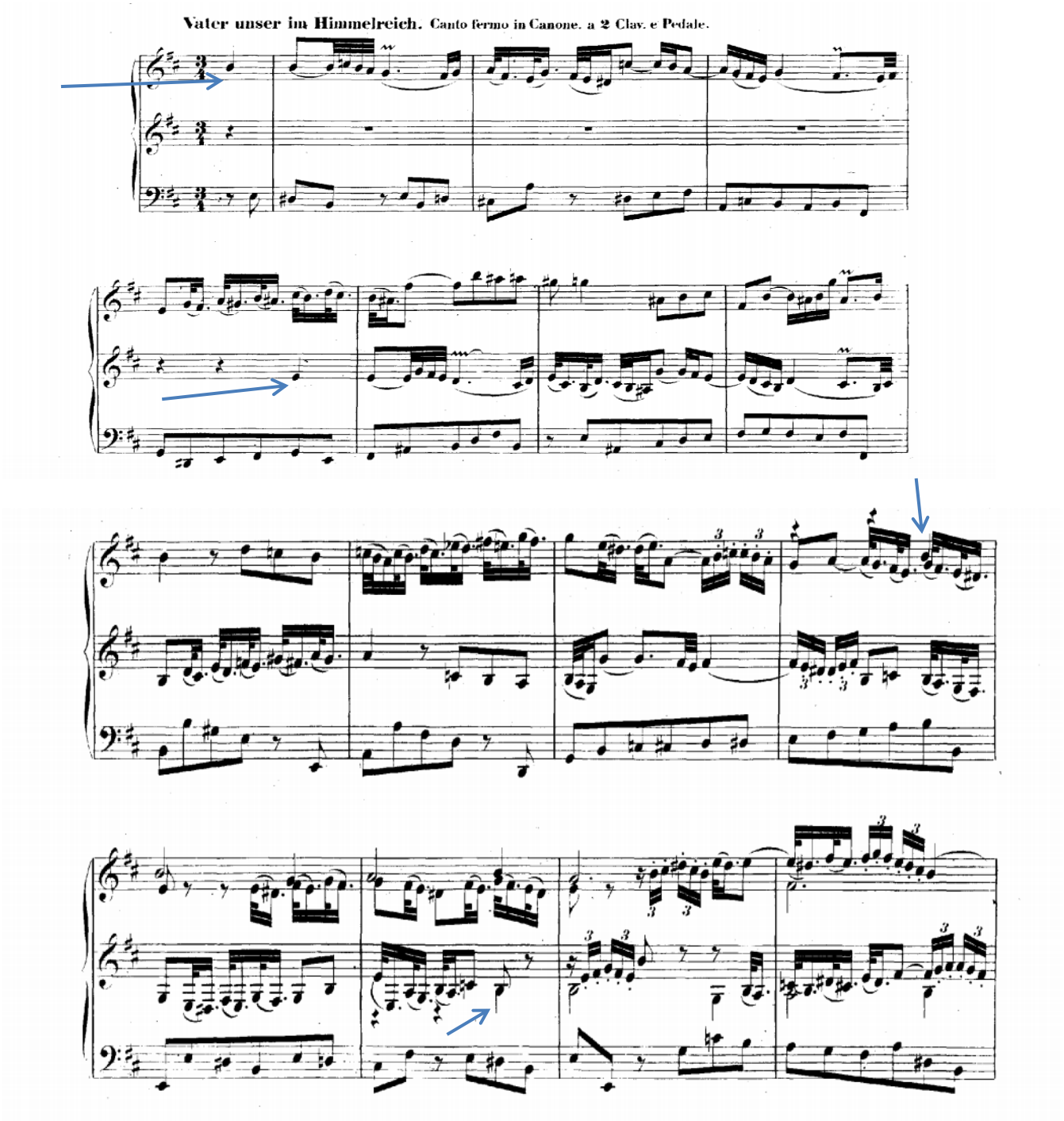
Whilst the above provides three examples, in fact practically every episode contains reference to this canonical idea, and beneath is a table illustrating the other passages where this can be located.

Table No.12 – The Episodes containing the Canonical Motif in BWV 538 (ii).

Episodes Containing Reference to the Canonical Motif
bb.25 - 28
bb.37 - 42
bb.50 - 53
bb.67 - 70
bb.77 - 80
bb.88 - 100
bb.125 - 129
bb.138 - 143
bb.156 - 159
bb.163 - 166
bb.178 - 186

It is clear that the prolific use of canon is the very essence of this fugue. It is as though Bach has inverted the hierarchy and that canon as a structural form, not only for subject entries but also for episodes, is integral to the design. Further evidence of Bach's use of canon as a rhetorical and communicative device in another organ work, particularly with portraying God and Mankind, can be found in *Vater Unser im Himmelreich* BWV 682 –

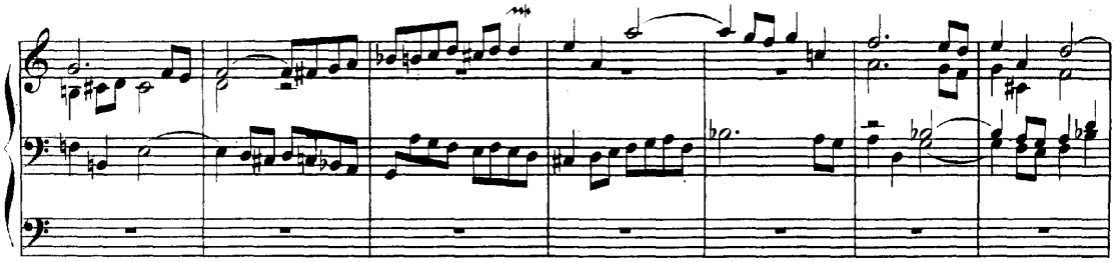
Illustration No.123 – BWV 682 – bb.1- 15.



Bach uses both the *ritornello* theme and the chorale by means of canon. That Bach should use a very similar structural backdrop for this fugue further alludes to the notion of divine contrapuntal devotion. A further extraordinary feature of this fugue, and indeed a trait which becomes apparent

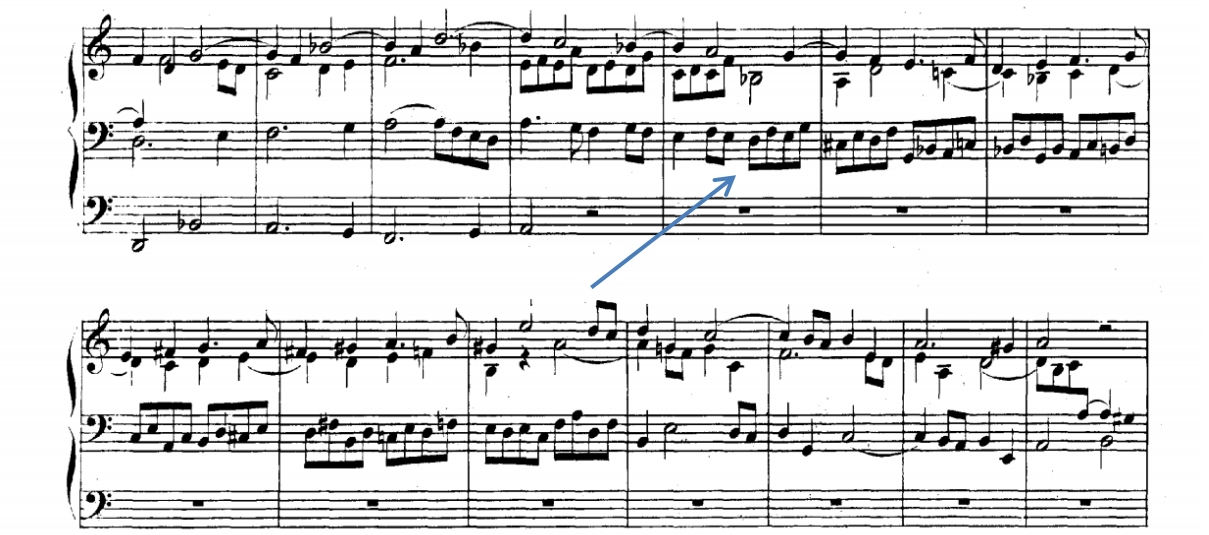
in the forthcoming fugues, is Bach's handling of thematic material which is so tightly concentrated and organised. To this extent, there are very few bars which contain an example of 'free counterpoint'. There is only one brief passage of truly 'free' counterpoint between bb.160 – 162:

Illustration No.124 – BWV 538 (ii) – bb. 159 – 165.



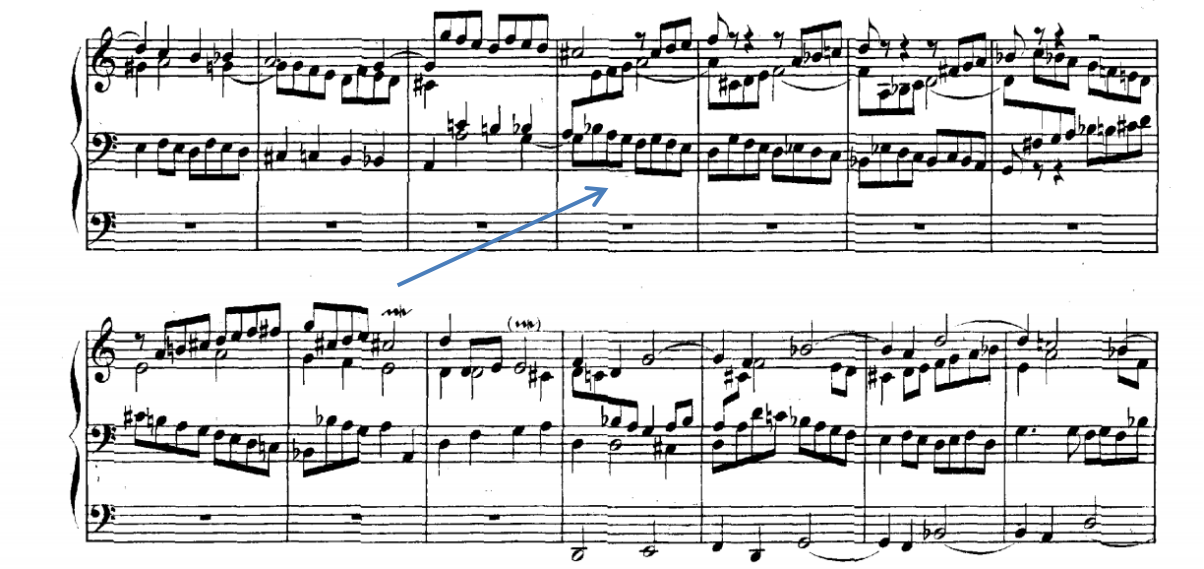
Two other passages which do contain a differing theme to either the subject or the canonic motif occur between bb.62 – 66: here the 1st countersubject is taken as an identity for the running bass.

Illustration No.125 – BWV 538 (ii) – bb. 58 – 71.



However, it is apparent that it is not exactly free counterpoint as the element of sequential development is at the forefront of its genesis. Similarly, the episode between bb.196-202 demonstrates similar processes and one can clearly witness the sequential design therein.

Illustration No.126 – BWV 538 (ii) – bb. 194 – 207.



As such, everything else throughout the fugue can be traced either to the subject and its respective countersubjects, or indeed to the canonical motif found in every episode.

The aspect of harmony in this fugue, and as to whether the harmony dictates the counterpoint or vice versa, allows for a considerable palette of expansive harmony. That the counterpoint is so meticulously worked out allows for the harmony to change every beat in each bar. However, the sheer density of contrapuntal manifestations allows for some particularly dissonant *passing harmonies*. There is not one bar which contains the same harmonic identity as before or after, and indeed there is not one bar which is harmonically secure. Thus, there is a constant harmonic evolution through the fugue though this is still governed by a relatively narrow tonal compass concerning the keys of the prevailing subject entries.

Illustration No.127 – BWV 538 (ii) – bb.45 – 50.

1) Dominant 13th on G in root position

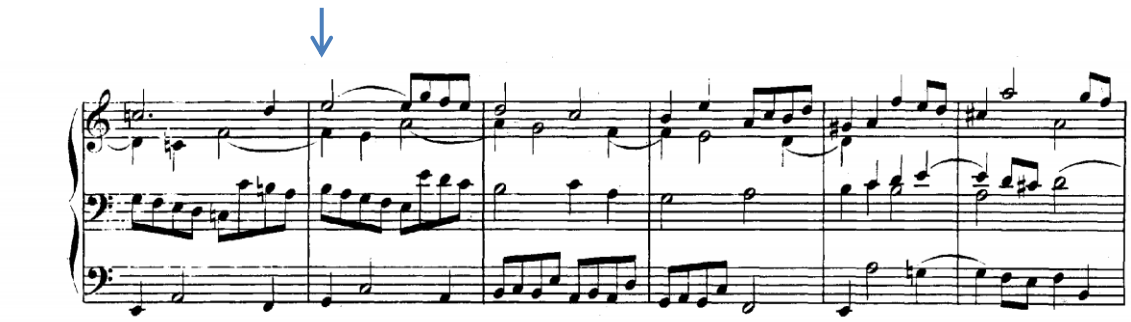


Illustration No.128 a – BWV 538 (ii) - bb.201 – 207.

2) (b.205, 1st beat, 2nd quaver) An augmented triad with the added 9th.

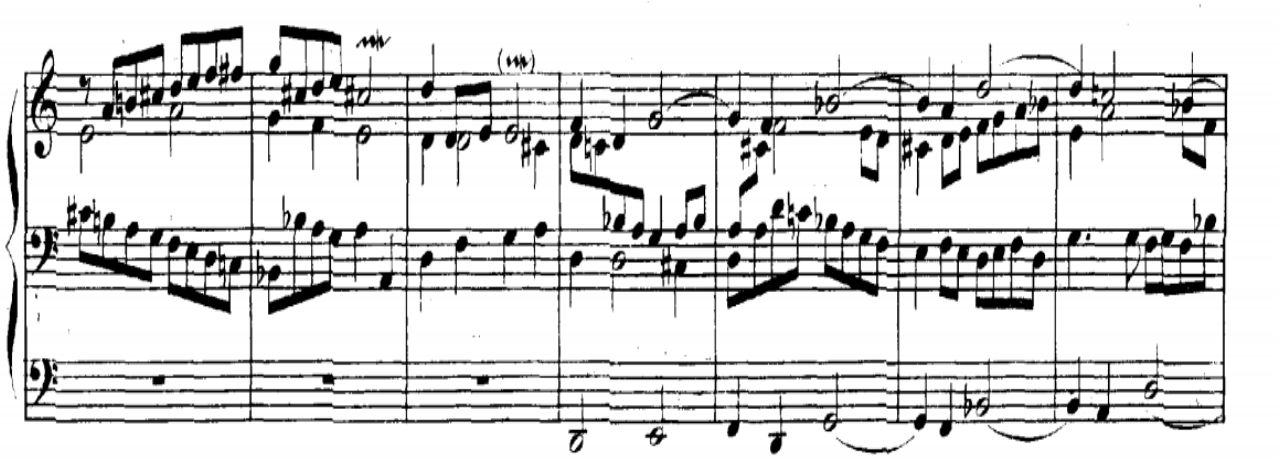
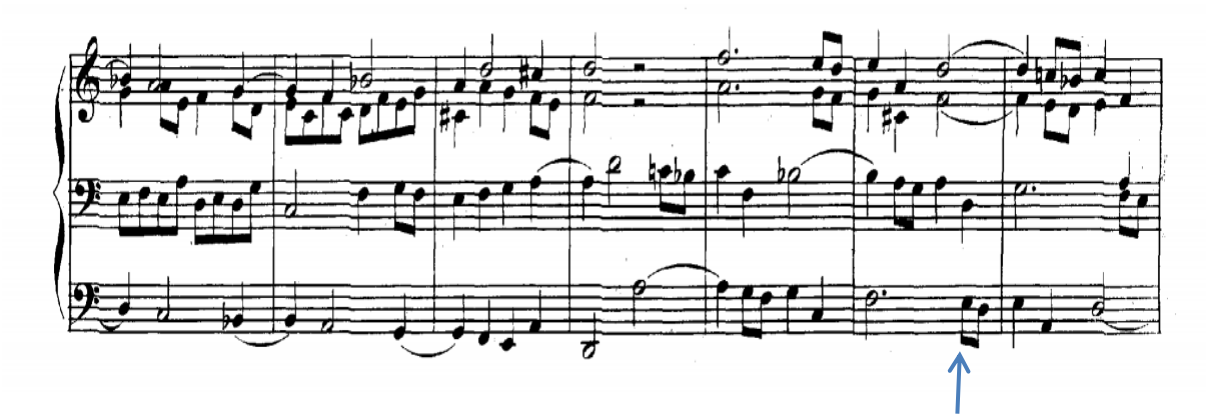


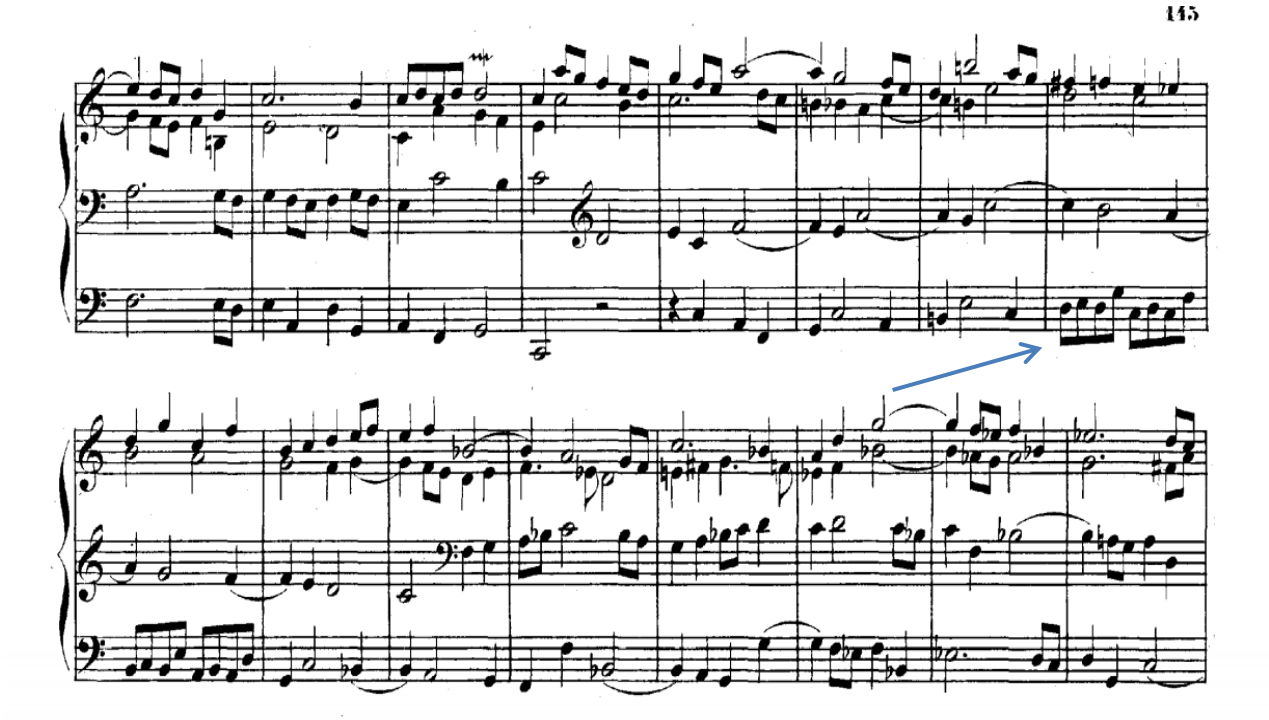
Illustration No.128 b - BWV 538 (ii) – bb. 208 – 214.

3) (b.213, 1st beat) A triple suspension that is neither approached from consonance nor really resolves strictly onto consonance.



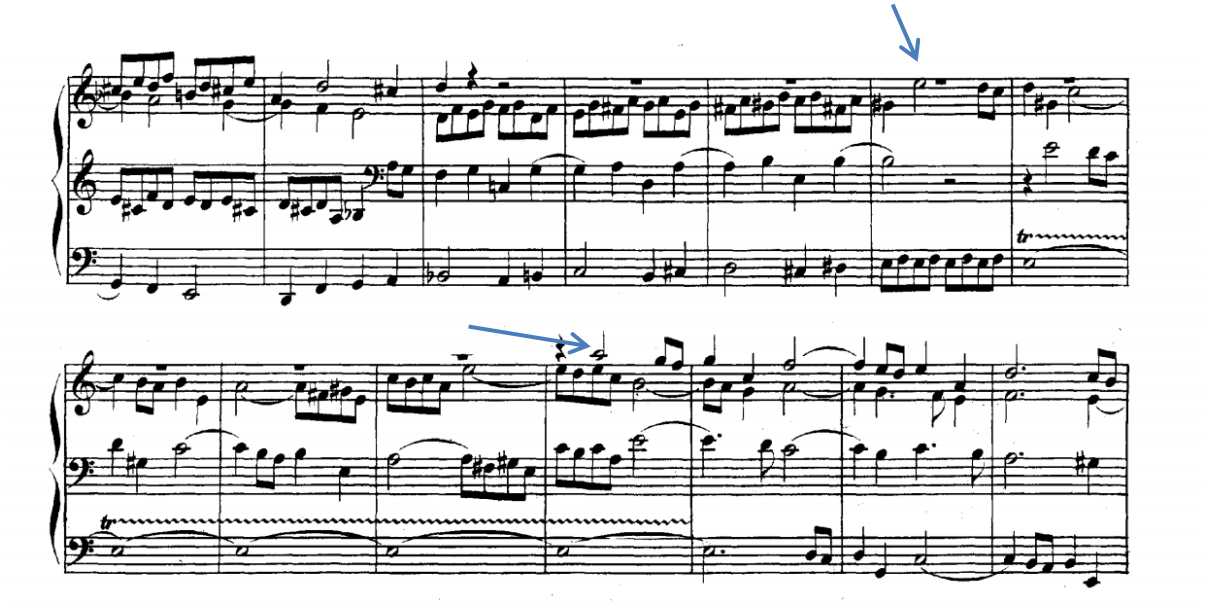
Without doubt the harmonic language, particularly in the coda, is remarkably expressive and represents a defining point of the language of this fugue. An example of a highly organised cycle of 5ths with interlocking suspensions occurring at each beat takes place at b.119. Again such procedure really exhibits the calculating mind at work: how best to compact so much into so little time frame.

Illustration No.129 – BWV 538 (ii) - bb. 112 – 127.



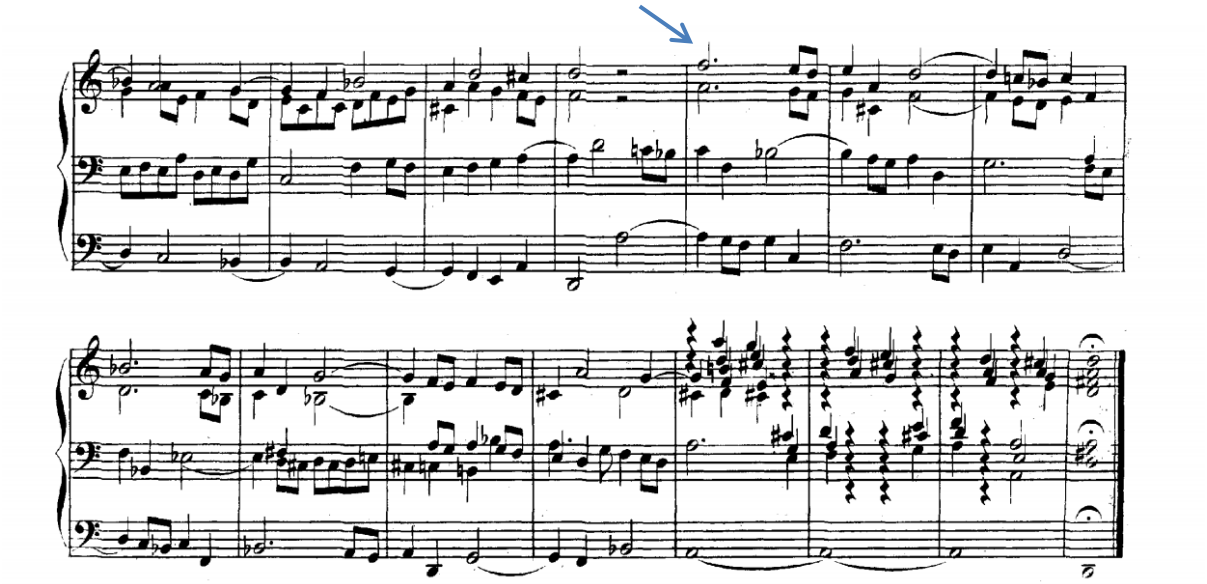
The final point concerning this fugue concerns the two most important themes – the subject itself and of course the canonical episodic motif. Both play an indispensable role within the complex fugal structure. More to the point, however, is the relationship between the two thematic components and indeed which component occupies the dominant role within the structure. In a normal situation, one would argue that it is the matrices of fugal subjects and their entries that provide the foundation to the fugal structure. However, in this remarkable case, one could easily argue that it is the *canonic episodes* that provide the main focus (accentuating once again the aforementioned 'third method'). To bring home this argument, one can point to the pre-climactic pedal on V of V close to the end of the fugue at b.179. Here one would normally expect its resolution to coincide with a final entry of the fugal subject. Yet, as if to invert the very rhetorical nature of conventional fugal structure, Bach's resolution is to recapitulate the canonic material as a climactic gesture. In this respect, such a gesture is unique in Bach's fugal literature and provides a wholly unexpected yet entirely inevitable conclusion to a structure which, on the one hand, seems antiquated in style and discipline, yet is entirely modern in its structural innovation.

Illustration No.130 – BWV 538 (ii) – bb. 173 – 186.



Moreover, whereas one would expect there to be a clearly prepared final subject entry, the final musical utterances are all based on the canonic motif and this is ultimately the climax.

Illustration No.131 - BWV 538 (ii) - bb. 208 – end.



Consequently, it is hard to understand precisely what Bach intended to convey as there are so many different levels at which one can interpret different ideas. However, what is most apparent from a contrapuntal perspective is the use of canon, not only with regard to the entry of the subjects but also throughout the episodes. Above all, it represents a wistful, but nonetheless powerful and dramatic statement of human expression. This fugue is an exhibition of harmony coupled with meticulous counterpoint, producing a fugue of unrivalled effect; it leaves one in awe of such sophistication in composition.

Bach developed the conviction that composition is a mode of thought and expression, and therefore the harmonies ought to be dictated by the mind, by what one intended to say, not the other way around. It was this shift in Bach's thinking, of the dominance of mind over material, which was to transform the language of music forever.[62]

I would argue that it was not just a question of mind over material but rather, how the mind organised the material so as to convey the expressions of the mind.

[62] Beets, Megan, *Johannes Kepler's Harmony of the Worl*d - *Bach's Harmonies,* Book III (LAROUCHE PAC Website)

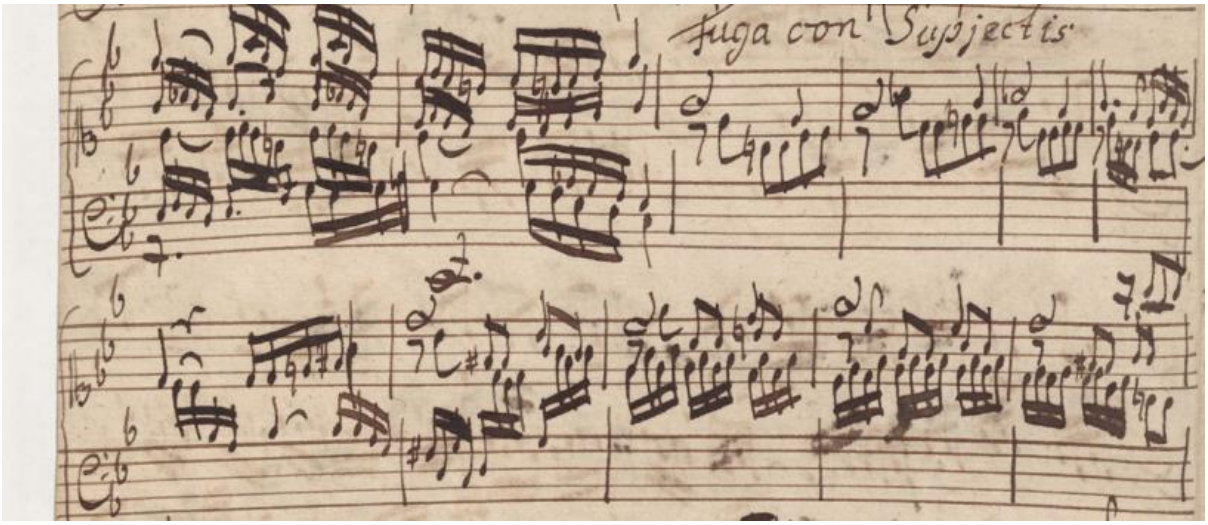
CHAPTER 8

Passacaglia in C Minor - *Thema fugatum* – BWV 582 –

The art of variation and *Gematria* as a structural procedure

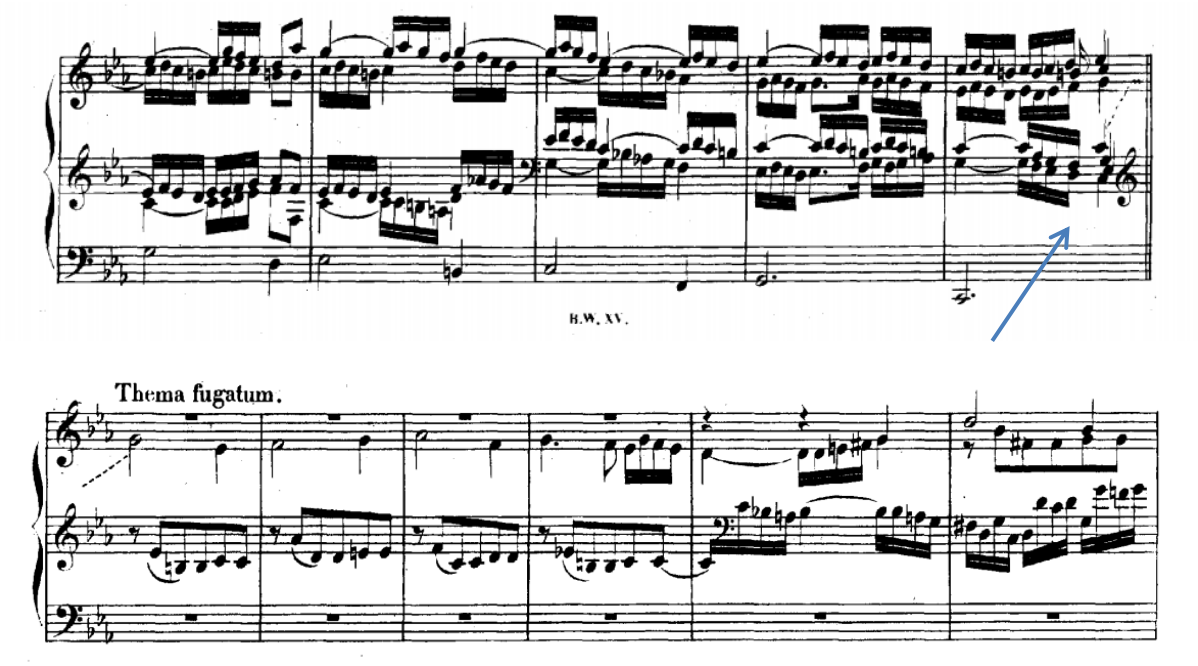
The Passacaglia is a unique work in Bach's organ literature, as it is the sole work which is a set of variations developed from an initial ground bass. The fugue which follows is in many ways the ultimate contrapuntal realisation of the ground bass as it is also coupled with two recurring countersubjects. It is also unique from the perspective of thematic continuity whereby the fugal subject is inspired from the preceding movement. No other Prelude, Toccata or Fantasia for organ by Bach contains thematic reference to the subject which provides the foundation of the subsequent fugal subject outline. Whilst Bach's original manuscript is lost (as is the case with the majority of the organ works), a contemporaneous copy was made by Carl August Hartung who was the organist in Cöthen between 1720-39. It is worth pointing out that with this copy, the score was compressed and the pedal line is shared with the left hand of the manuals in the bass clef. The soprano clef is also used.

Illustration No.132 – A fragment of a contemporaneous copy of BWV 582 by Carl August Hartung.



The *Bach – Gesellschaft Ausgabe* from 1867 further alludes to this theme of continuation by making the voice distribution particularly clear. Bach would not have begun the fugue by omitting the first note, as the identity of the theme would be somewhat thwarted. Thus, the 'C' is clearly identifiable in the tenor register on the diagram which follows.

Illustration No.133 – BWV 582 – bb. 164 – 174.

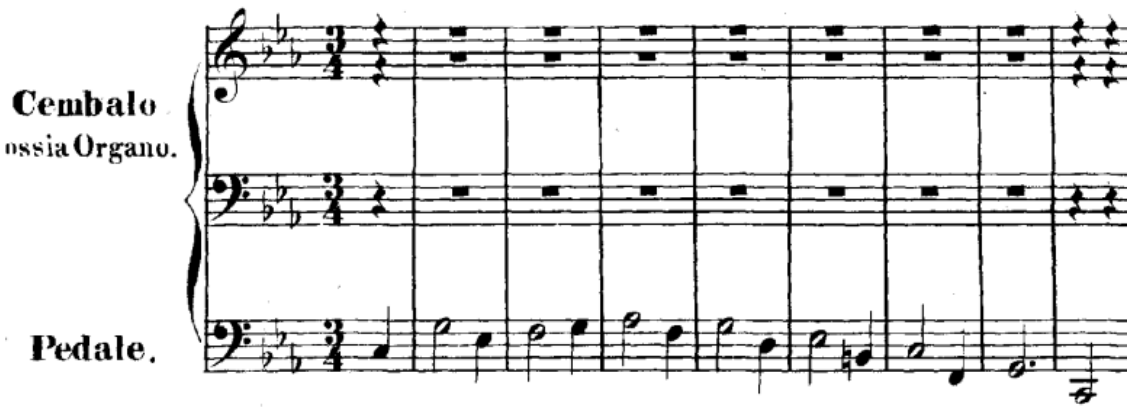


One cannot help observe that Bach felt that the chaconne and passacaglia, as structural forms of variation, provided both harmonic and contrapuntal limitations. Despite Bach's tendencies to modulate at times extensively in other works, the Passacaglia preceding the fugue never modulates and the theme recurs consistently in the tonic. There are no other works in the Bach organ literature that bear the same title or prove to be of resemblance. It is curious that whilst Buxtehude and Pachelbel's influence was formidable in many of the other organ works of Bach, their influence in using that of the chaconne or passacaglia seems to have been far less given the paucity of organ examples by Bach. In addition, although merely a theory, the fugue as a medium would have probably been understood by Bach as the more superior of the two genres from a contrapuntal and harmonic perspective. It is though Bach had to prove to himself and indeed others, that the same theme could also be cast in strict counterpoint, not least allied with two other recurring countersubjects.

David Rumsey's article 'The Symbols of the Bach Passacaglia' has proved to be one of the most illuminating studies into the work as it truly incorporates the integrity of the fugue. Most analyses from the early part of the 20th Century tend to deal purely with the Passacaglia, with the fugue as a separate entity. Before beginning an analysis and highlighting the most relevant features of the Passacaglia as *an entire work*, the one background aspect to this work (as a whole) is that of hidden numerological meanings contained within. Bach's knowledge of the Cabbala and the idea of incorporating mystical symbolisms in music is evident without doubt. Aside from the clearly

sequential design of the theme, the first aspect to mention is that of the significance within the subject of the Passacaglia itself. If one takes the intervals of the subject, there are two substantial references to personal and religious numerology.

Illustration No.134 – BWV 582 – bb. 1- 8.

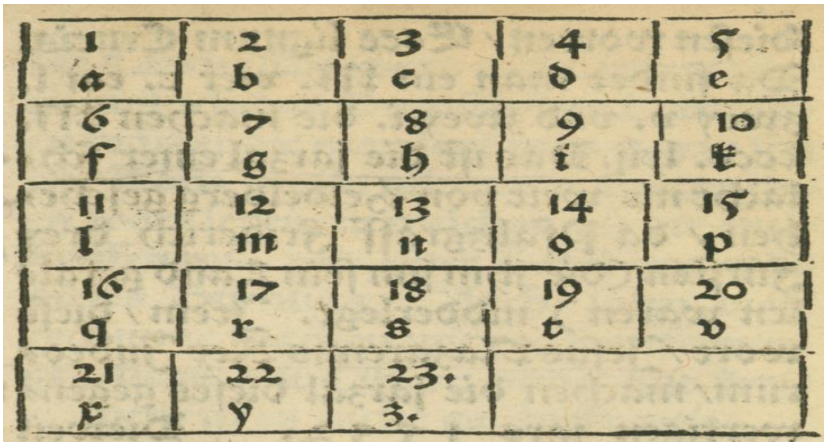


As David Rumsey eloquently suggests, the two hidden numerological meanings can be explained as follows by the numbers '14' and '43'. The evidence is undoubtedly compelling and is highly likely that Bach had deliberately intended such an esoteric design.

Table No.13 – The *Gematria* within the opening statement of the Passacaglia.

Interval	Accumulative Number	Intervallic Number
C - G	1	5
G - Eb	2	3
Eb - F	3	2
F - G	4	2
G - Ab	5	2
Ab - F	6	3
F - G	7	2
G - D	8	4
D - Eb	9	2
Eb - B	10	4
B - C	11	2
C - FF	12	5
FF - GG	13	2
GG - CC	**14**	5
		43

Illustration No.135 – The shortened alphabet known to be in Bach's possession – currently at the Bachhaus in Leipzig.

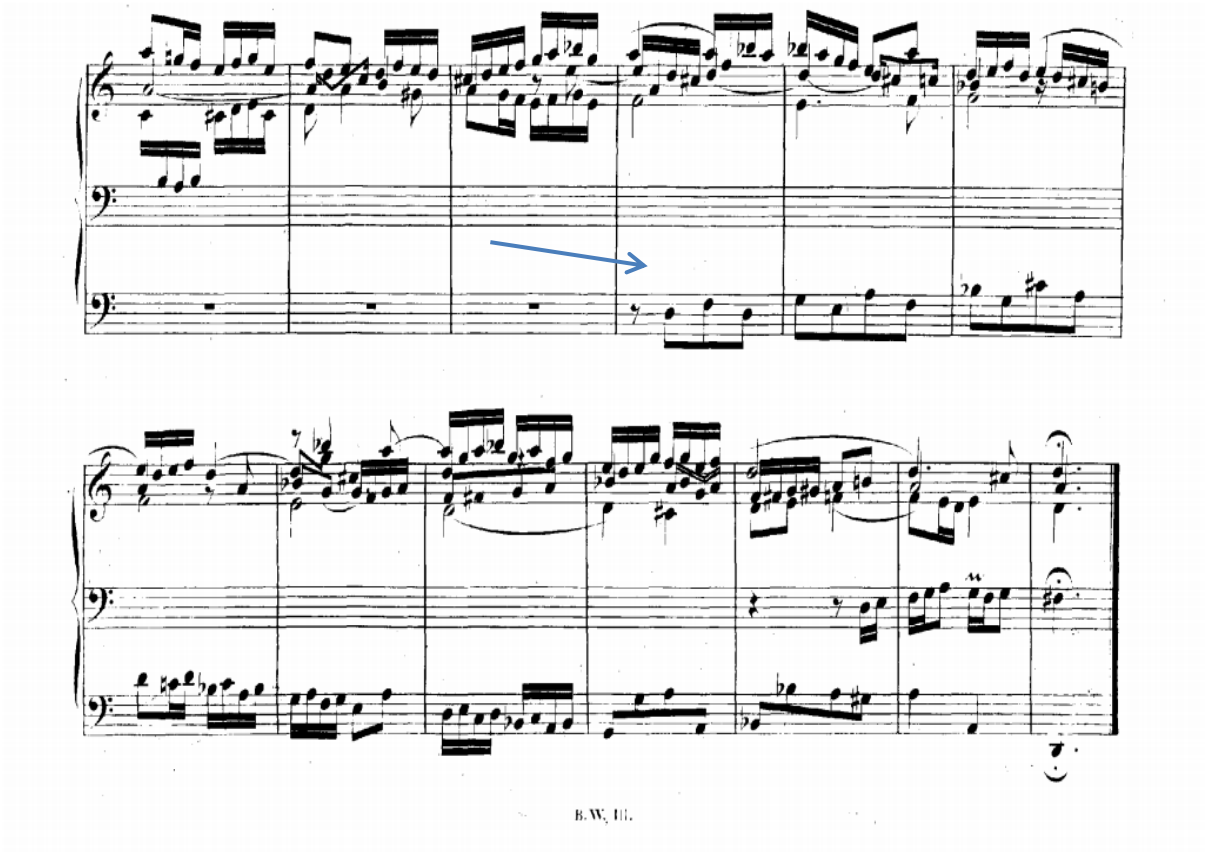


The significance of the number '14' of course refers to BACH – the accumulated number from the addition of A = 1 B = 2 etc. Of course, this could be applied to any musical line which contains '14' specific intervals. However, it is the next meaning which is more compelling and of significance to the work as a whole. If one takes the addition of all the collective intervals e.g. C – G (5th) = 5, G – Eb (3rd) = 3 etc. the total is a number of religious significance – 43. In a similar manner to the workings of BACH, 43 makes reference to the word CREDO (I believe) if one uses the above alphabet corresponding with the respective numbers which is directly from the *Bachhaus* in Leipzig.[63]

The purest evidence for another reference to this can be found specifically from *Wir gläuben all an einen* Gott from *Clavier Übung III* . The final pedal entry makes a similar reference. 'The use of the number '43' to represent CREDO occurs in the Chorale Prelude *Wir gläuben all en einen Gott***:** the final pedal entry comprises '43' notes.'[64] Of course, every analyst has reason to be cautious about 43 'notes' – comprising quavers and semiquavers. In addition, it could merely be a coincidence. Of course whilst both the articles by Rumsey and Hughes are potentially dubious at times, there is much to be lauded given their findings and their statistical significance. *Clavier Übung III* is a testimony of faith and the fact that there are '43' notes is significant (it could easily be any other number). Moreover, it is the final ostinato statement and is in essence a summation.

[63] Rumsey, David, 'The Symbols of the Bach Passacaglia' (1992) p.18
[64] Hughes, Indra, 'ACCIDENT OR DESIGN? New Theories on the Unfinished Contrapunctus 14 in J. S. Bach's The Art of Fugue BWV1080' (University of Auckland: Doctor of Musical Arts - Thesis, 2006) p.8

Illustration No.136 – BWV 680 – bb. 88 – 100.



Arguably, Bach is testing whether <u>*we* </u>*believe* in the numerology which Bach has set before us. However, it is no good citing one or two examples as they could be merely coincidences. The following analysis regarding the Chaconne from BWV 1004 further instils the notion of Bach's tendencies to applying *gematria* as a background structural device. The death of Bach's first wife, Maria Barbara, in the summer of 1720, had a profound effect on Bach. Such a great loss was to transpire not only through day to day living and the upbringing of five children, but also in his music: some of his writing from this period is a testimony to the tragedy. Helga Thoene's insightful analysis is compelling in that it reveals so many hidden messages within the music. Of the most striking, one needs to examine the opening four and a half bars.

Illustration No.136 b – Chaconne from Violin Partita in D Minor BWV 1004 – bb.1 – 4

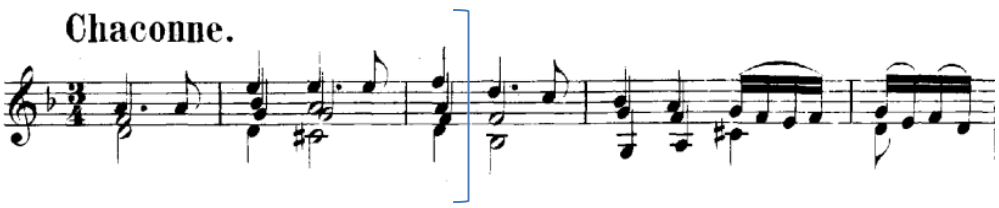
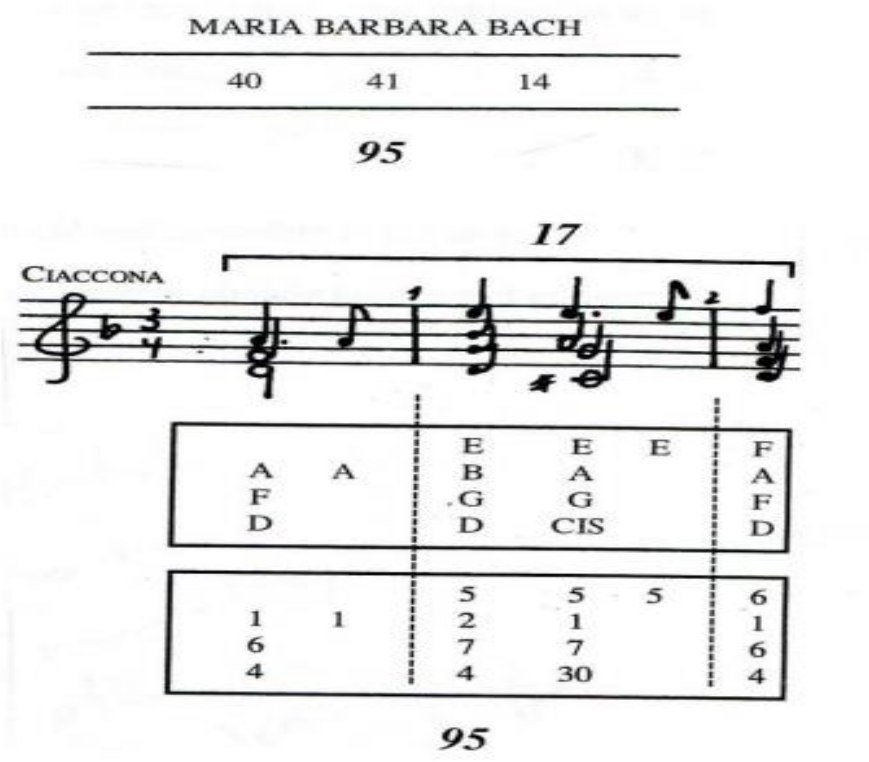


Table No. 14 – The hidden *Gematria* representing the dedication to Maria Barbara Bach.

M	**A**	**R**	**I**	**A**			
12	*1*	*17*	*9*	*1*	= 40		
B	**A**	**R**	**B**	**A**	**R**	**A**	
2	*1*	*17*	*2*	*1*	*17*	*1*	= 41
B	**A**	**C**	**H**				
2	*1*	*3*	*8*	= 14			
Total = **95**							

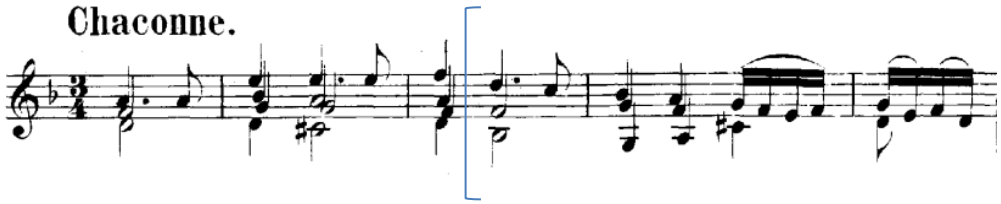
The notes within the first one–and–a–half measures of the Ciaccona add up to 17 notes in total. The next half of the phrase has 20 notes. These numbers, 17 and 20, can be interpreted as the year of Maria Barbara's death (1720). Coming back to the first phrase, by adding the numerological value of these 17 notes we end up having a total number of 95, which (see above) refers to her full name.[65]

Illustration No.136 c – The realisation of Maria Barbara Bach through the *Gematria*.



[65] Thoene, Helga**,** *Johann Sebastian Bach Ciaccona: Tanz oder Tombeau* (Oschersleben: dr. Ziethen Verlag, 2009) p. 77

Illustration No.136 d – The second phrase of the opening statement representing *'20'* (1720) through the collective number of notes in the second phrase.

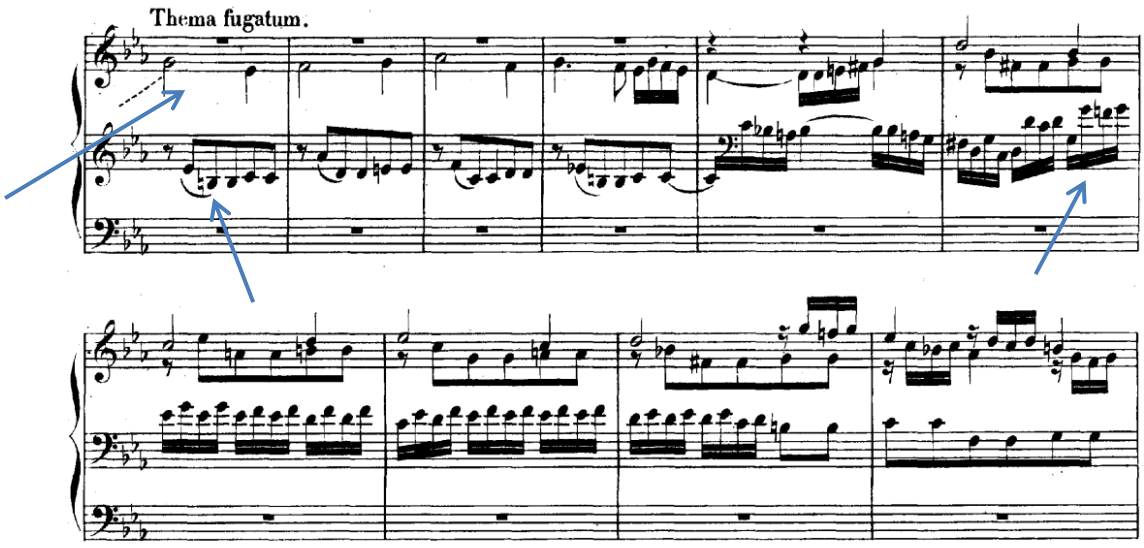


Of course, there are reasons to be cautious concerning Helga Thoene's analysis. Is this exactly as Bach intended or is Thoene just simply plucking numbers from the air and making short sighted conclusions? Maybe, but the evidence cannot be doubted given the widespread use by Bach.

Thema fugatum is likely to be fairly contemporaneous with BWV 542 (ii) or indeed BWV 538 (ii) given the triple invertible nature of the fugal writing. Furthermore, given the stylistic differences between the Passacaglia and *Thema fugatum*, I do think they were conceived at different stages in Bach's career; the Passacaglia dating from c.1710 and *Thema fugatum* from 1720-1727. The significance of symbolism and religious zeal cannot be overlooked given the fact that both the St John and St Matthew Passions (BWV 245 and BWV 244) were also conceived during this time frame; both of which contain a vast array of hidden encryptions.

Unlike any other organ fugue by Bach, the fugue within the Passacaglia contains two subjects which begin in the same bar. It is at b.174 that the triple invertibility begins.

Illustration No.137 – BWV 582 – bb. 169 – 178.



In actual fact, this fugue can be regarded as triple invertible all the way through with the subject and countersubject entries. Moreover, as Peter Williams points out, 'no permutations of themes and voices appear twice, and almost all possible are there'.[66]

Illustration No.138 – The different permutations and alignments of the three subjects.

The three subjects *a*, *b* and *c* work in permutation:

	169	174	181	186	192	198	209	221	234	246	256	272
S		*a*	*b*	*c*		*c*	*b*	*c*		*a*		*a*
A	*a*	*b*	*c*		*a*	*b*	*a*	*b*	*c*		*b*	*b*
T	*b*	*c*		*a*	*b*	*a*	*c*		*a*	*b*	*c*	
B			*a*	*b*	*c*			*a*	*b*	*c*	*a*	*c*

Regular triple invertible counterpoint is maintained throughout this fugue.

Table No.15 - The subject entries throughout BWV 582

Measure	Device	Voice
168	S	Alto
169	C/S	Tenor
173	S + 5	Soprano
174	C/S + 5	Alto
174	C/S (ii)	Tenor
180	S - 8	Bass (Ped.)
181	C/S + 8	Soprano
181	C/S (ii) + 4	Alto
185	S - 4	Tenor
186	C/S - 11	Bass (Ped.)
186	C/S (ii) + 8	Soprano
191	S	Alto
192	C/S	Tenor
192	C/S (ii) - 5	Bass (Ped.)
197	S - 6	Tenor

[66] Williams, Peter**,** *The Organ Works of J.S. Bach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) p.185

198	C/S + 3	Alto
198	C/S (ii) + 6	Soprano
208	S - 2	Alto
209	C/S + 7	Soprano
209	C/S (ii) - 6	Tenor
220	S - 11	Bass (Ped.)
221	C/S + 5	Alto
221	C/S (ii) + 8	Soprano
233	S - 8	Tenor
234	C/S - 8	Bass (Ped.)
234	C/S (ii) + 4	Soprano
245	S + 5	Soprano
246	C/S - 4	Tenor
246	C/S (ii) - 8	Bass (Ped.)
255	S - 12	Bass (Ped.)
256	C/S + 4	Alto
256	C/S (ii) - 2	Tenor
271	S + 8	Soprano
272	C/S	Alto
272	C/S (ii) - 5	Bass (Ped).

The true extent of Bach wishing to maintain the importance of the passacaglia theme as consistently recognisable is ultimately illustrated by the fact that one would expect a tonal alteration for the answer form of the subject. That on no occasion does this happen further suggests that the work must be seen as a whole, rather than two separate works. The following three diagrams illustrate three examples of the subject allied to the two countersubjects in different permutations throughout differing key areas.

Illustration No.139 a – BWV 582 – bb. 179 – 183.

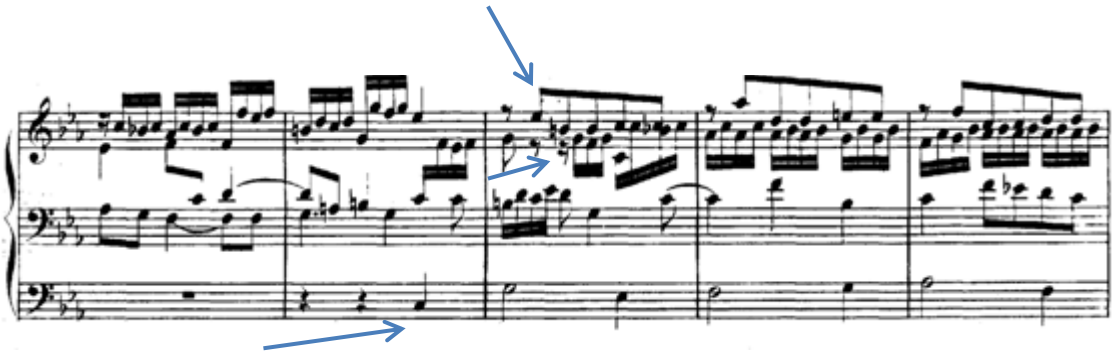


Illustration No.139 b - BWV 582 – bb.184 – 188.

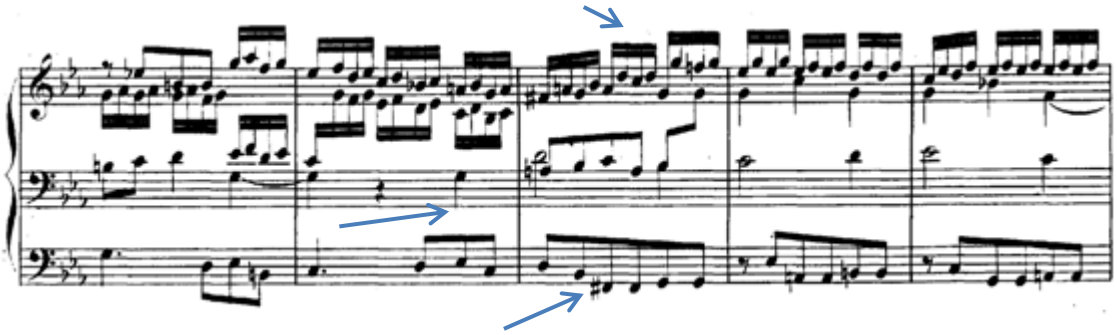
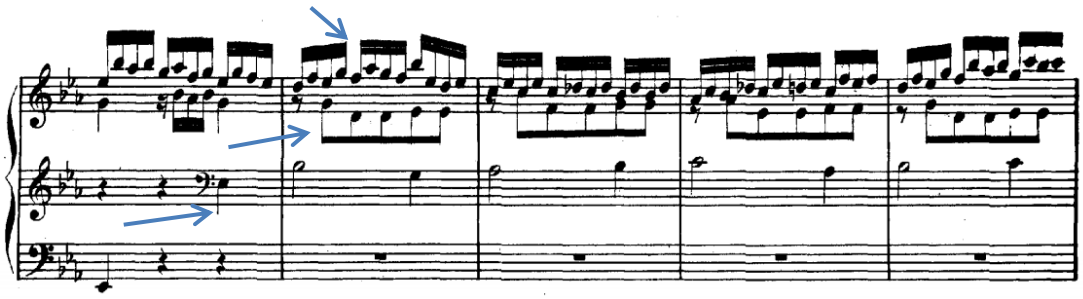


Illustration No.139 c – BWV 582 – bb. 197 – 201.



Of all the fugues discussed so far, this fugue is most clearly structured around a tonal design. The modulations are undeniably apparent, and there are clear modulations to related keys as the table below illustrates.

Table No.16 – The modulations encountered throughout BWV 582.

Related Key	Bar No.
Eb Major	b.197
Bb Major	b.208
G Minor	b.220
F Minor	b.255

In addition, there is another significance behind the tonal plan. Of the twelve entries of the subject, the scheme is symmetrically proportioned so as to allow five entries in minor keys, two in major keys followed by a further five in minor keys. The outline is as follows:

Table No.17 – The tonal planning behind BWV 582.

Bar No.	Key
169	C Minor
173	G Minor
180	C Minor
185	G Minor
191	C Minor
197	Eb Major
208	Bb Major
220	G Minor
233	C Minor
245	G Minor
255	F Minor
271	C Minor

As David Rumsey also points out, the number '12' in this instance is of significance: of course one must think laterally and refer to Bach's mind-set. The number '12' can of course make reference to the number of disciples that are found in the New Testament. It is curious to note that in the preceding movement of the Passacaglia, there are precisely '21' statements of the theme; '21' being the literal inversion of '12'. Moreover, the sum of both '21' and '12' provides the number '33' which is the supposed age at which Jesus died. Further to this evidence, the first movement of the Passacaglia is contemporaneous with that of the *Orgelbüchlein* (BWV 599 – 644) which was certainly known to have been completed by the time Bach left Weimar in 1717. Perhaps one of the clearest references can be made at b.129 from the Passacaglia and that of the first movement (BWV 599) – *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland* .

Illustration No. 140 a - BWV 599 - b.1

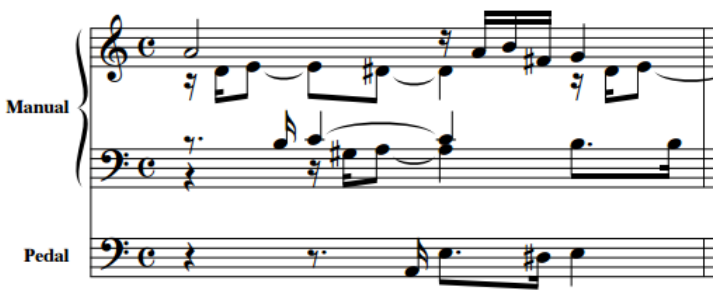
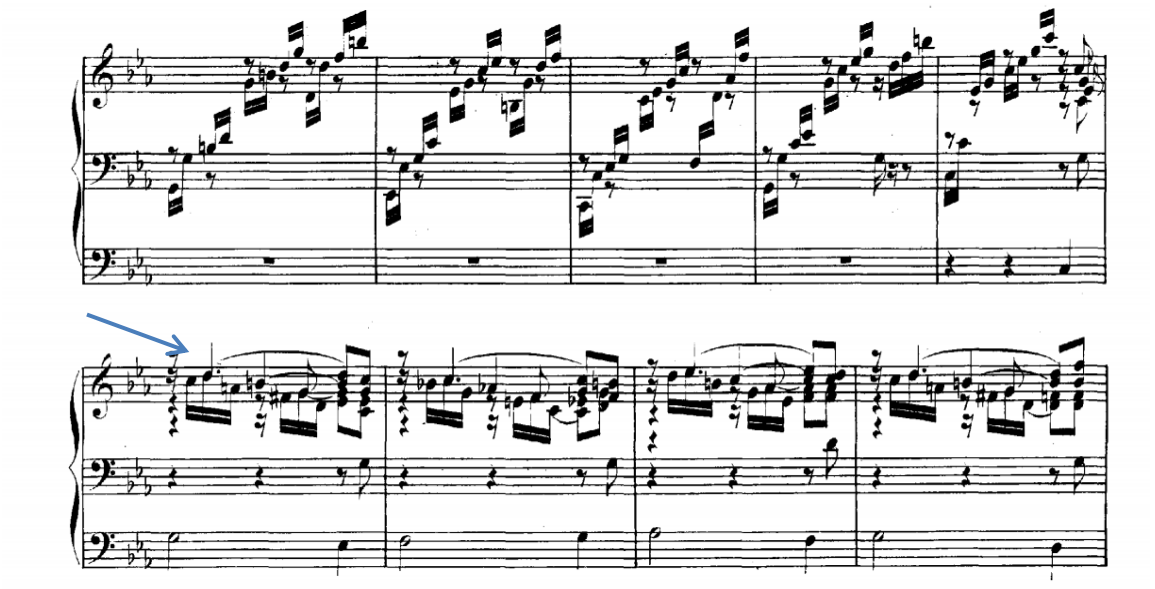


Illustration No.140 b – BWV 582 – bb. 124 – 132.



Here Bach has realised the ideal of the chorale prelude. The method is the most simple imaginable and at the same time the most perfect. Nowhere is the Dürer-like character of his musical style so evident as in these small chorale preludes. Simply by the precision and the characteristic quality of each line of the contrapuntal motive he expresses all that has to be said, and so makes clear the relation of the music to the text whose title it bears.[67]

Schweitzer knew how Bach could portray an idea or a meaning in music and whilst the effect might be subtle to the lay listener, to the informed interpreter, the instinctive nature is remarkably clear. The overlap in compositional styles between these works cannot fail to be noticed and thus an overall numerological and religious symbolic system is not surprising, and is arguably highly likely.

Concerning the episodes of this fugue, the most revealing trait that they possess is that they are all inter-related by the unification of the various themes which they utilise. It is perhaps no coincidence that the first substantial episode (bb.204-208) is very closely related to the final episode (bb.276-280) which itself leads into the coda. The most similar aspect is that of the bass line in both examples – the interconnectivity of thematic ideas throughout the episodes is immediately apparent.

[67]Schweitzer, Albert, *J.S. Bach – The Poet Musician* – Revised and Translated (UK: Read Books Ltd. April 2013).

Illustration No.141 a – BWV 582 – bb. 202 – 211.

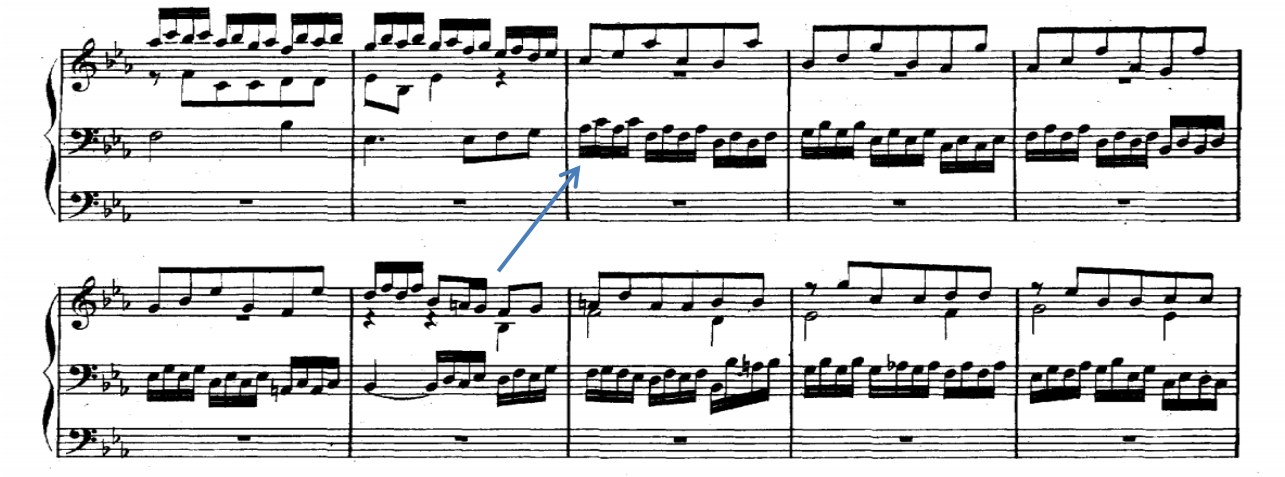
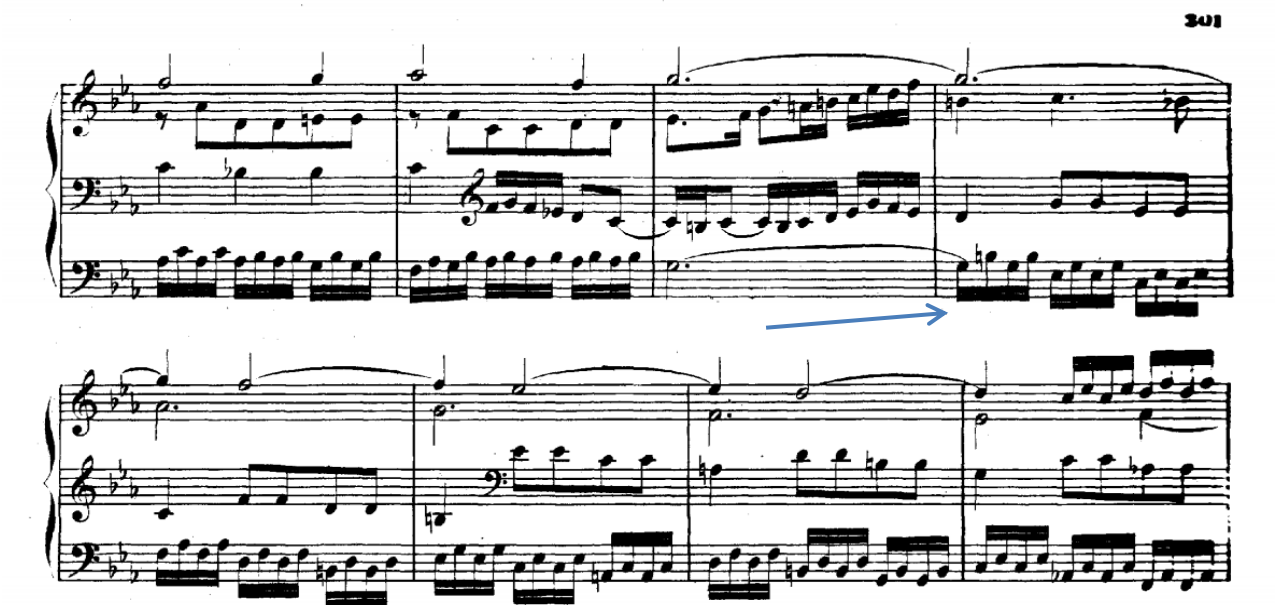


Illustration No.141 b – BWV 582 – bb. 273 – 280.



One of the most notable themes which occurs during the longest episode (bb.225-232) is that of the first countersubject. It, too, is also used in the previous episode (bb.213-219). Beneath are two illustrations showing the connection of how the first countersubject is utilised in sequential form.

Illustration No.142 – BWV 582 – bb. 212 – 215.

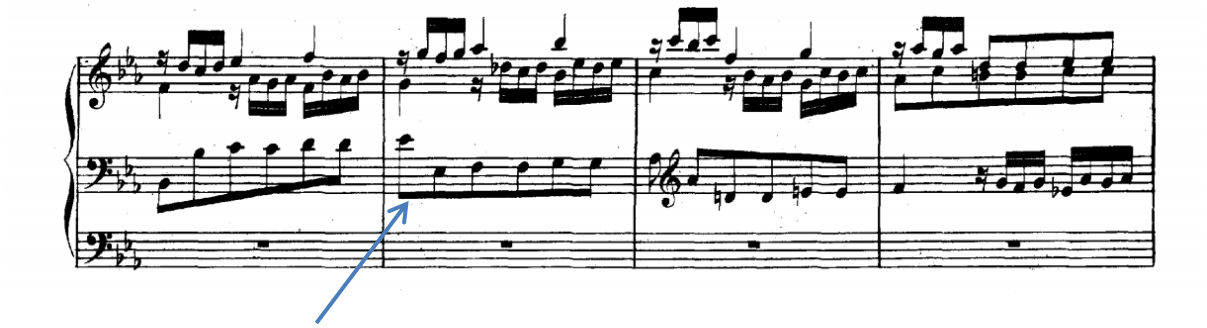
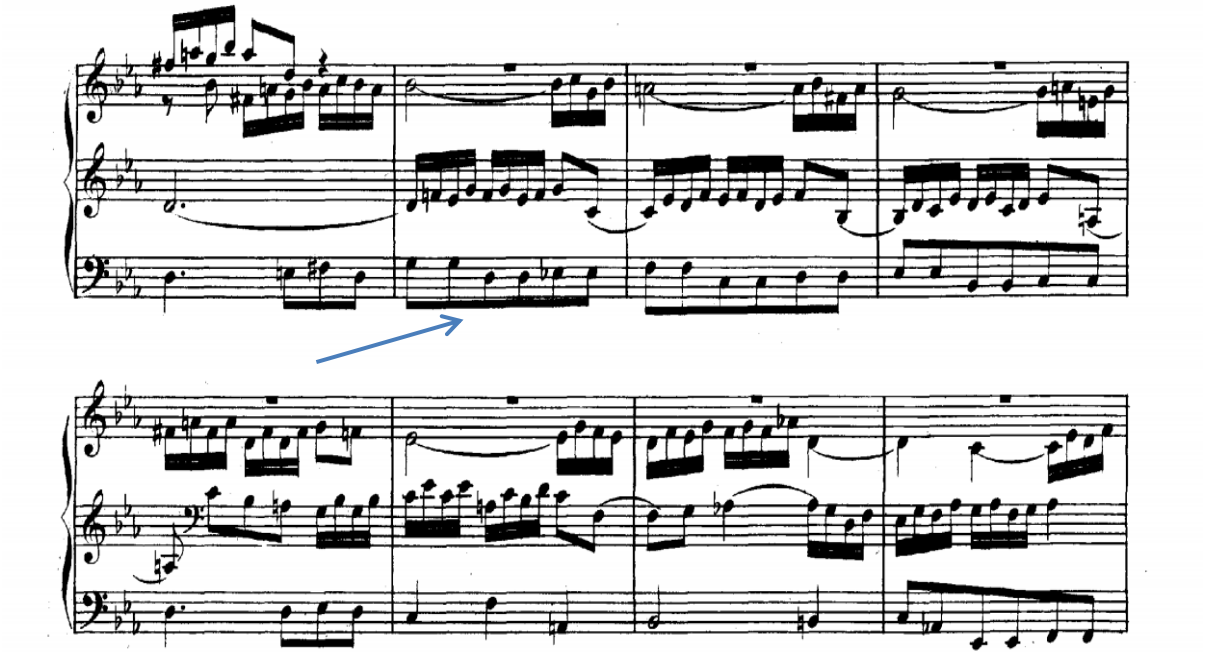


Illustration No.143 – BWV 582 – bb. 224 – 231.



The remainder of the episodes are all related by recurring patterns of *perpetuum mobile* semiquavers. The first pattern of these appears at b.217. The similarities can easily be verified at bb.237-238 and at bb.263-266.

Illustration No.144 a – BWV 582 – bb. 216 – 223.

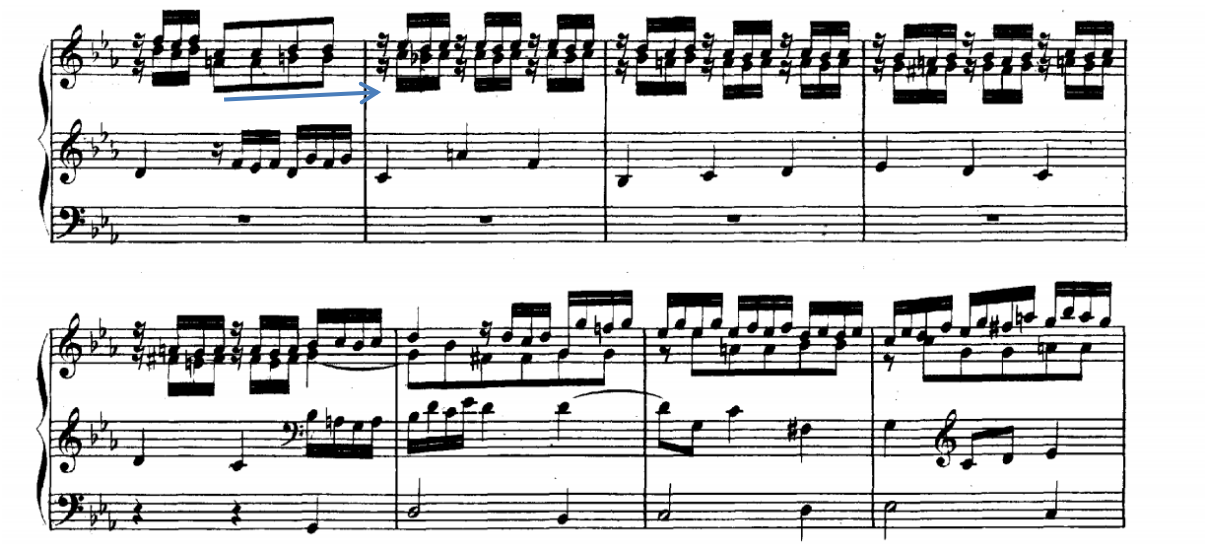


Illustration No. 144b – BWV 582 – bb. 236 – 247.

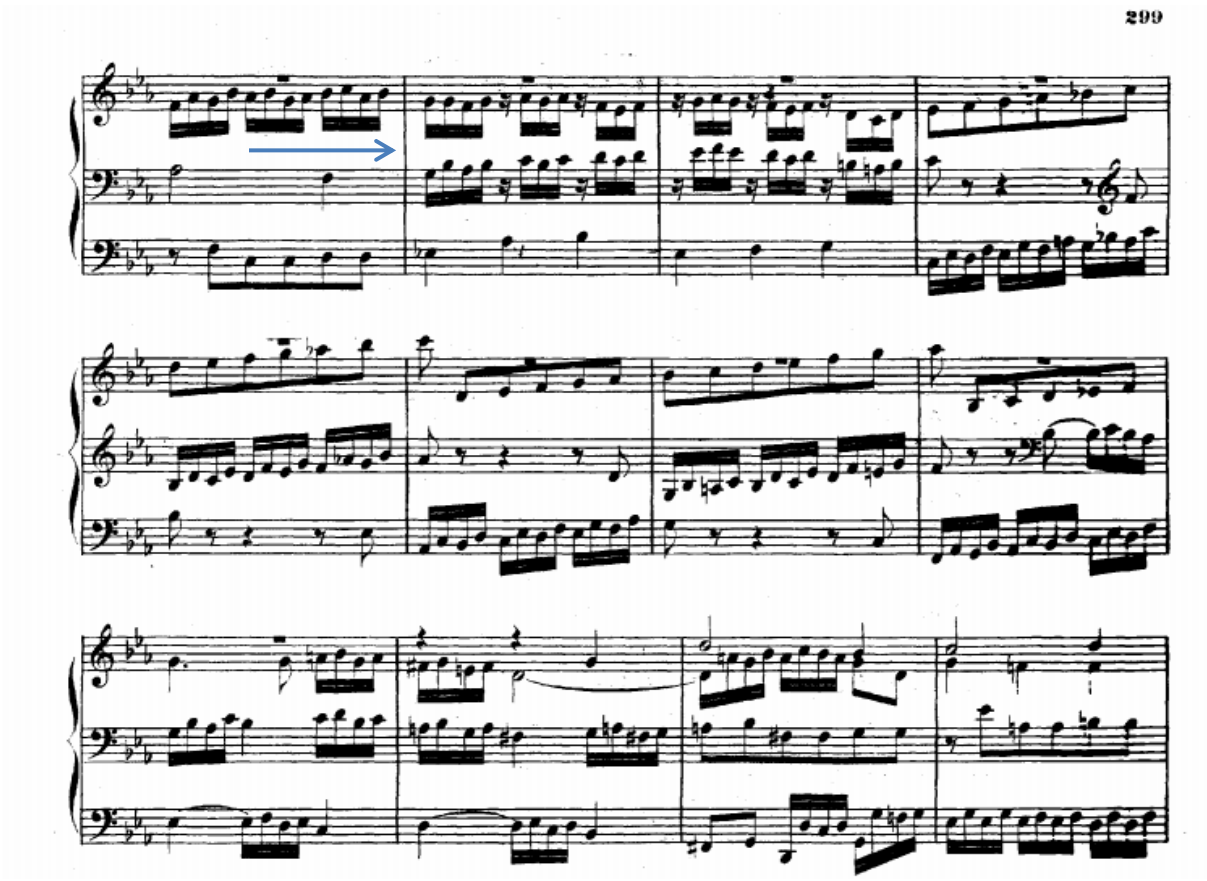
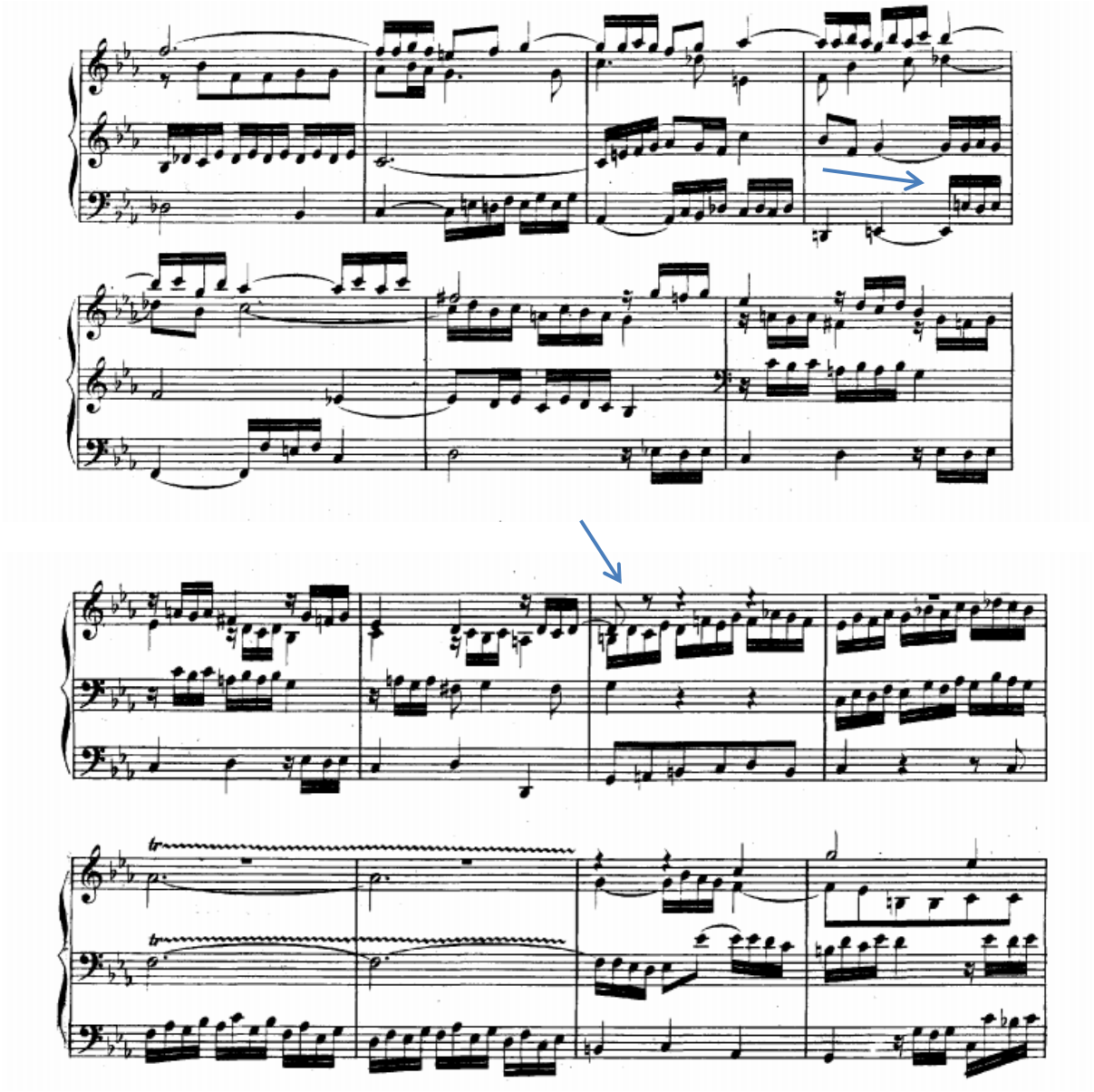


Illustration No.144 c – BWV 582 – bb. 258 – 272.



One can also see the distinct connection from the ascending sequences which emerge at b.239 that are also found beginning at b.267. Whilst of course this relatively austere collection of thematic material might seem relatively modest, the ability to then re-work it and create ideas from them is formidable. That such a fugue can be traced back to so few elements further alludes to how Bach planned before he begun the compositional process. The ideas were carefully conceived and then exploited almost for their simplicity and malleability.

Whilst contrapuntal procedures are carefully considered throughout this fugue, what is most enchanting is that the analyst cannot fully proclaim with certainty on any aspect. One can question

and scrutinise the significance of aspects such as strict triple invertibility, the symmetrical tonal design of the subject entries and of course numerology. Firstly, concerning triple invertible counterpoint, Bach was well aware of Andreas Werckmeister's theories through his writings - *Musicae mathematicae hodegus curiosus* (1687) and *Musikalische Temperatur* (1691) and how invertible counterpoint was deemed to represent order.

> The heavens are now revolving and circulating steadily so that one (body) now goes up but in another time it changes again and comes down . . . We also have this mirror of heaven and nature [*Himmels- und Natur-Spiegel*] in musical harmony, because a certain voice can be the highest voice, but can become the lowest or middle voice, and the lowest and middle can again become the highest. One voice can become all other voices and no other voice must be added, and at the very least . . . four voices can be transformed in different ways in good harmony.[68]

One often feels with Bach's counterpoint that he is trying to take it to a level that was not only worthy of his forefathers, but also to a level that exceeded it, and that would also not be exceeded itself. As Bach was a devout Lutheran, one also cannot help feel that applying such rigour and discipline in musical construction further magnified Bach's faith and its relevance in his music.

> The constant motion of the heavens is thus analogous to the perpetual revolution of the parts in a well - constructed piece of double *(or triple)* counterpoint, whose inversions mirror the perfection of heaven and provide earthly beings with a glimpse of God's unending order, a prelude to the heavenly concert.[69]

In addition, the term *Verhältniß* (proportion) was familiar to Bach, and one which the theorist Johan Mattheson preached. Furthermore, Nikolas Forkel makes specific reference to the young Bach and the compositional thought processes.

> He soon began to feel that the eternal rushing and leaping led to nothing; that there must be order, connection and proportion ('die Ordnung, Zusammenhang und Verhältniß') in the thoughts, and that, to attain such objects, some kind of guide was necessary. Vivaldi's Concertos for the violin . . . served him for such a guide. He so often heard them praised as admirable compositions that he conceived the happy idea of arranging them all for his clavier. He studied the chain of ideas, their relation to each other ('das Verhältniß derselben unter ein ander'), the variations of the modulations, and many other particulars.[70]

The symbolisms, particularly those found in the Passacaglia itself of course can be linked to various chorale preludes found in the *Orgelbüchlein* but the overall numerology is of great intrigue. Frederich Smend in 1947 showed various numerological symbolisms, many of which were doubtful

[68] Yearsley, David, *Bach and meanings of counterpoint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) p.101
[69] Tatlow, Ruth, *Bach's Numbers : Compositional Proportion and Significance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015) p.256
[70] Tatlow, Ruth, 'Collections, bars and numbers: Analytical coincidence or Bach's design?' from *Understanding Bach* (2007) p.37

owing to the fact that they could not be proved, and that there was no specific method of proving them. However, what is of interest, and of course directly relevant to the Passacaglia, is that of using numerology as an overall structure by means of planning. Both a religious and mathematical aspect can be located in the *Credo* and *Patrem Omnipotentem* from the B Minor Mass (BWV 232).

CHRISTUS is expressed by the number 112, CREDO by 43. The 'Credo' of the B Minor Mass, in its original form, has 784 bars (i.e. 7 x 112) . . . In the chorus 'Credo in unum Deum' in the same work, the word CREDO appears 43 times. The same chorus, plus the following movement 'Patrem omnipotentem' amounts to a total of 129 bars (3 x 43)[71]

Whilst David Rumsey's article concerning the Passacaglia is potentially doubtful concerning numerology, Bach undeniably possessed a mathematical mind and it is highly likely that Bach calculated to exhaustion the mechanisms of the counterpoint in BWV 582 before completing it. Kees van Houten and Marinus Kasbergern with their study 'Bach en het Getal' concluded there were 2493 bars in total in the B Minor Mass.[72] Now the significance of this number for BWV 582, as David Rumsey points out, is as follows:

The entire work is contained within 293 bars. 293 is a prime number. This might be seen as a sign of the unity and indivisibility of the Covenants. But in examining another Covenant related work of Bach's, the Mass in B Minor, we may observe how it has a grand total of 2,493 bars .

It has been suggested that, by returning these numbers to letters, Cabbala style, we get:

2 = **B**

4 = **D**

9 = **J**

3 = **C**

Beatus **D**ominus **J**esus **C**hristus The "Dominus" may be dispensed with and the meaning remains essentially the same, leaving the relevant number-equivalents as 2 (B), 9 (J), and 3 (C). Thus we may observe a further common relationship between the Passacaglia and the B Minor Mass: they share their Christ-symbols through their related bar-counts and significance: 2 (4) 9 3. Coincidentally, when we sum the digits in the 293 bars of the Passacaglia we get a total of 14, a fact which can hardly have passed unnoticed by the composer:

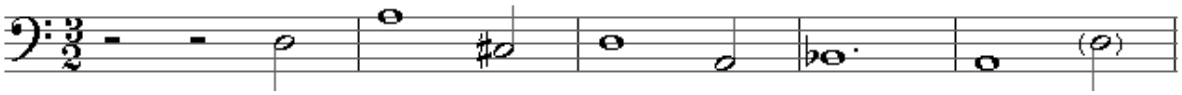
293 2 + 9 + 3 = 14 = B + A + C + H[73]

[71] Smend, Friedrich, *Johann Sebastian Bach: Kirchenkantaten erläutert* (No. III) (Berlin: Christlicher Zeitschriftenverlag, 1947–9; reprint editions Berlin, 1950 and 1966) p. 20
[72]Van Houten, Kees, and Kasbergen, Marinus, *Bach an het Gatal* (Zutphen, *De Walburg Pers,* 1985) p.120
[73]Rumsey, David, *'The Symbols of the Bach Passacaglia'* (1992) p.24

There is scope for substantial doubt regarding the B Minor calculation and whilst the above is certainly debatable, most people will indeed also dismiss the idea relating to BWV 582 because they will count only 292 bars in total. However, the anacrusis that marks the beginning of the Passacaglia is never resolved (both the Passacaglia and Fugue have full length bars of three crotchet beats respectively). Indeed, there are 293 bars if the extra beat is accounted for. Subsequently, whilst the evidence concerning the numerology may be clutching at straws somewhat, given the abundance of coincidences within this work, such findings cannot be lightly dismissed. Indeed, Buxtehude certainly included similar references in the Passacaglia in D Minor (BuxWV 161)

Buxtehude's lifelong interest in numerology is exhibited in the passacaglia's intricate structure. The numbers 4 and 7 are the foundation of the entire piece. The ostinato pattern is composed of 7 notes in 4 bars, and it appears 28 times (4 × 7 = 28). There are 4 sections, each 28 bars long.[74]

Illustration No.145 – BuxWV 161 – The Passacaglia theme in isolation.



That Bach would not have discussed composition and similar musical theories during his four month visit to Lübeck seems highly doubtful. Thus, whilst of course there is no treaty to prove these findings, one cannot avoid them, however doubtful. The other contentious issue is whether the Passacaglia and Fugue were written as one: it is arguable that they were not. The Passacaglia itself makes reference to many of Pachelbel's and Buxtehude's rhythmic devices found in their own chaconnes and passacaglias:

[74] Ackert, Stephen**,** *Numerical Structures in the Organ Works of Dietrich Buxtehude* (University of Wisconsin-Madison: UMI Research Press, 1979) p.42

Illustration No.146 – BuxWV 160 bb. 53 – 57 and BWV 582 bb. 80 – 82.

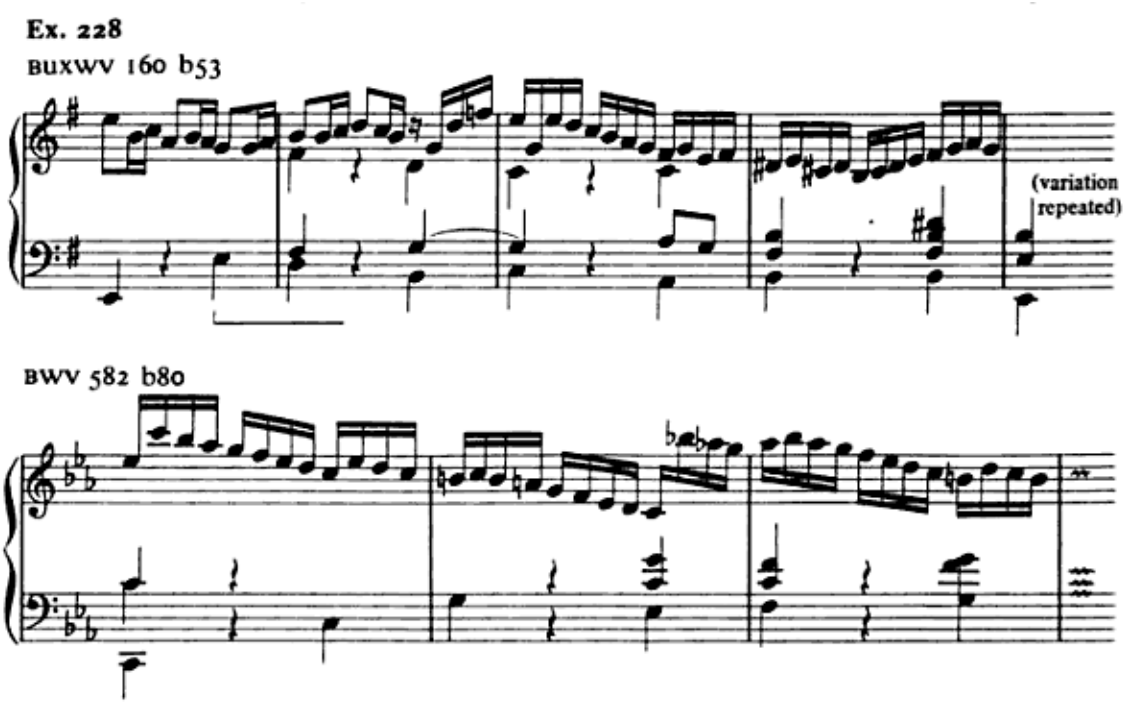
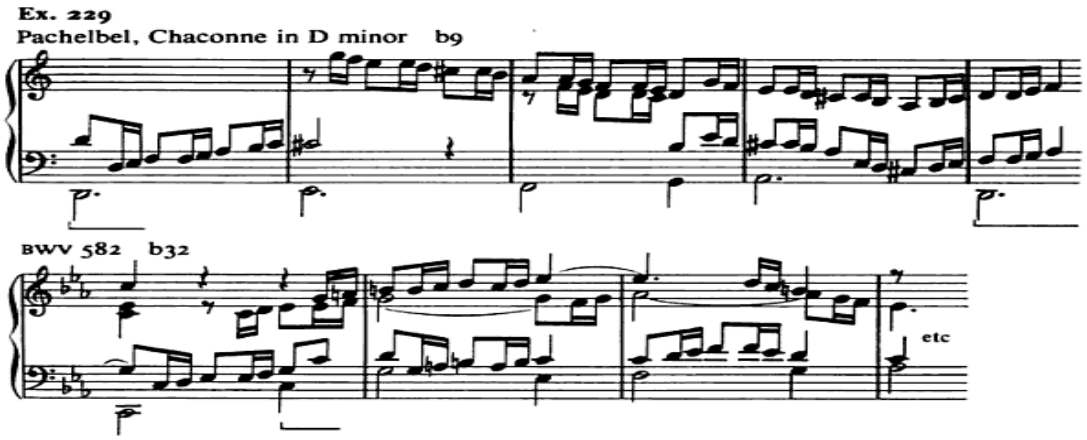


Illustration No.147 – Pachelbel Chaconne in D Minor – bb.9 – 13 and BWV 582 – bb.32 – 34.



75

An unusual feature of the fugue is the fact that a Neapolitan 6th at b.285 is treated as a caesura. Whilst there is no logical explanation for this, Bach does use a similar technique (albeit with a caesura and not in 1st inversion) in BWV 540 (i) In this case, there is an interrupted cadence to the flattened sub-mediant – Db Dominant 7th (4-2) at b.424.

Illustration No.148 – BWV 582 – bb. 281 – 288.

[75] Williams, Peter, *The Organ Music of J.S. Bach* Vol.1, (Cambridge: Cambridge Studies in Music, 1980) p.255

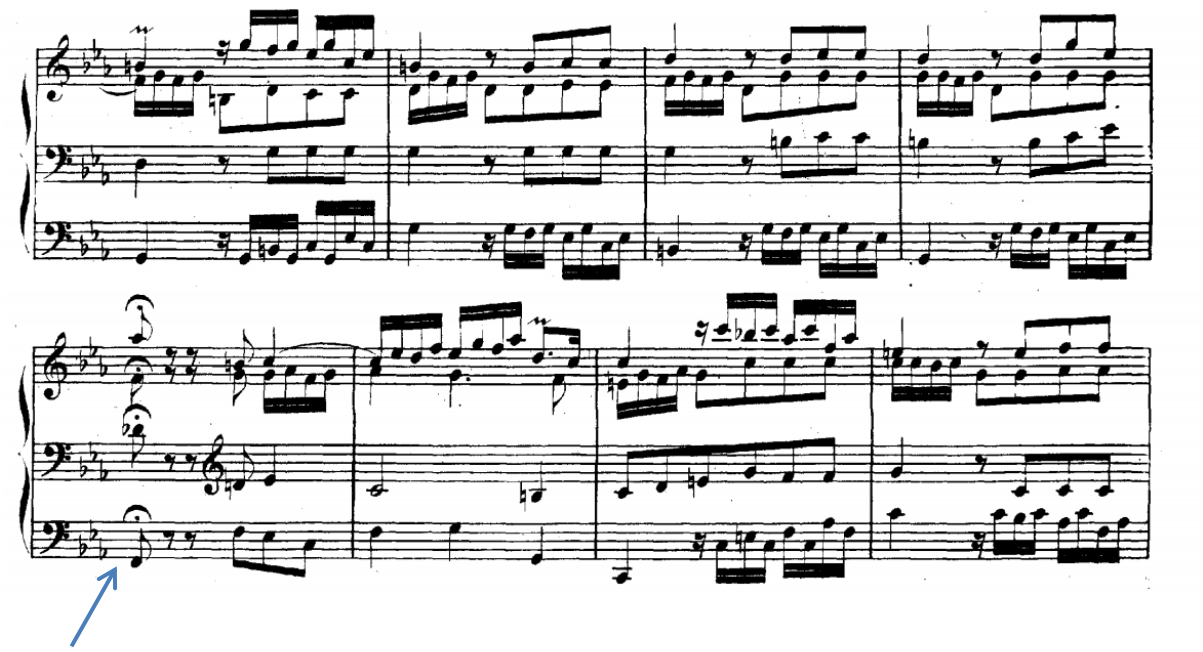
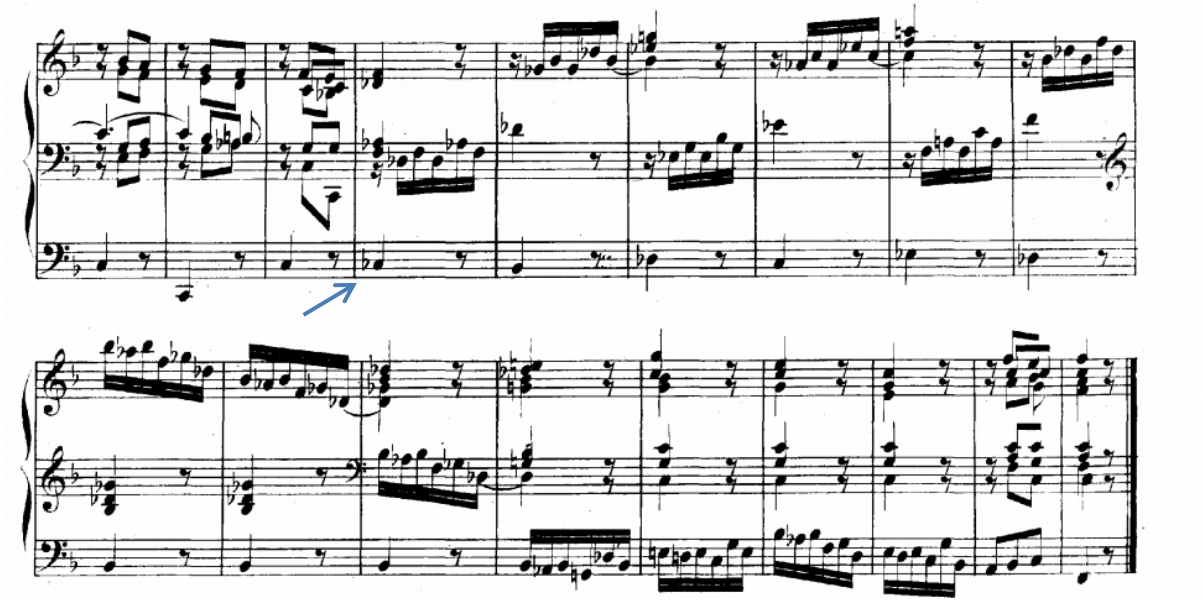


Illustration No.149 – BWV 540 (i) – bb. 421 – end.



The element of surprise in both BWV 540 (i) and BWV 582 cannot fail to be noticed. However, the refinement and yet at the same time complexity of the fugue which follows is a work of considerable maturity, an afterthought perhaps, but a multi-dimensional, crafted afterthought nonetheless. Subsequently, the *Thema fugatum* passage of the Passacaglia can be seen not only as a set of further variations but also as a 'grand finale' in which the theme forms part of a triple fugue (i.e. where its very existence is part of a three-way symbiosis with two other simultaneous fugal subjects) and no doubt Bach saw this as the true realisation of the inner contrapuntal potential.

CHAPTER 9

Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist BWV 674 - The influence of Vocal Polyphony

In his last years Bach put more energy into publishing his best keyboard works. The third volume of *Clavier Übung,* a magnificent collection of organ music, contained his most significant homage to Luther. The heart of the volume is a series of 21 movements based on chorale tunes whose texts refer to and expound the central Lutheran doctrines.[76]

With the publication of *Clavier Übung III* in 1739, Bach's compositional traits veered prolifically towards contrapuntal mastery and perfection. The collection exhibits a wealth of styles with clear evidence from the florid vocal polyphony of Palestrina contrasted by aspects of the late 18th century *galant*.

It stands on the threshold of his late style and was produced at a time when organ composition was no longer at the centre of his activities. Nevertheless, Lorenz Christoph Mizler remarked correctly in his 1740 review: The author has here given proof that in this field of composition he is more skilled and more successful than many others. No one will surpass him in it and few will be able to imitate him.[77]

One further aspect of *Clavier Übung III* is the question as to the significance of hidden meanings. One of the underlying themes is that of the Trinitarian depiction. Christoph Wolff's account and analysis in *Bach – Essays on his life and Music (1991)* is arguably the most compelling as it illustrates the cyclic internal structures. Whilst this is of course undoubtedly of interest, it nonetheless does not allow the analyst to perceive the inner musical mechanisms of each movement.

As several analysts have made clear , the two other *manualiter* settings (*Kyrie, Gott Vater in Ewigkeit* BWV 672, *Christe aller Welt Trost* BWV 673) and also this setting, are linked undoubtedly by their cyclic time signatures by ascending in multiples of three:

Table No.18 – the ascending triadic relationship with the time signatures, BWV 672- 674.

***Manualiter* Kyrie**	**Time Signature**
Kyrie, Gott Vater in Ewigkeit BWV 672	**3**/4
Christe aller Welt Trost BWV 673	**6**/8
Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist BWV 674	**9**/8

As is apparent, the significance of 'three' as a trinity reference is substantial and throughout the settings, the contrasting musical impact is clear to the ear. What is particularly unusual about BWV 674 is that it is hard to consolidate precisely what compositional style it illustrates. Of course, it is a fugue / fughetta but the contrapuntal treatment is antiquated (the key is based upon a Phrygian

[76]Moroney, Davitt**,** *BACH an extraordinary life* (London: ABRSM Publishing, 2000) p.90
[77] Wolff, Christoff, *Bach – Essays on His Life and Music*, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991) p.208

mode on E) though it is nevertheless very harmonically profuse. As the table beneath illustrates, there is a heightened sense of tonal ambiguity throughout.

The very nature of this fugue is a densely crafted *stretto* fugue with an entry in virtually every bar. The surrounding counterpoint is thematically inspired from the subjects and as such, the texture is maintained throughout.

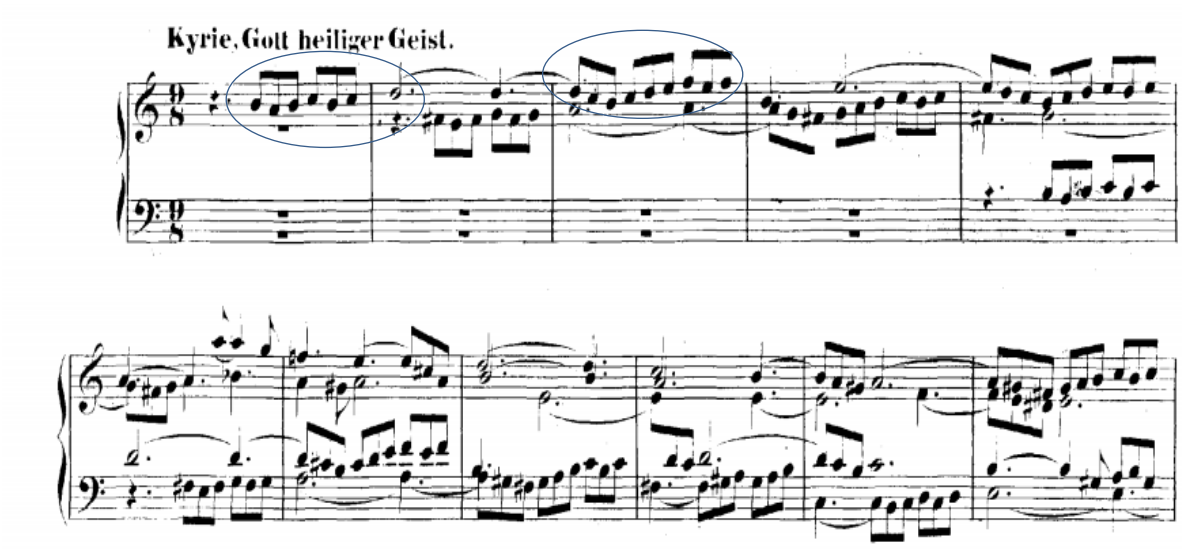
Table No.19 - the subject entries throughout BWV 674

Measure	Device	Voice
1	S	Soprano
2	S - 4	Alto
3	S(ii)	Soprano
4	S (ii) - 4	Alto
5	S(ii) - 2 (from 2nd beat)	Soprano
5	S - 8	Tenor
6	S - 11	Bass
7	S (ii) - 8	Tenor
8	S(ii) - 11	Bass
10	S - 14	Bass
11	S(ii) - 4	Soprano
12	S(ii) - 14	Bass
13	S - 10	Tenor
14	S - 15	Bass
15	S - 9	Tenor
16	S + 4	Soprano
16	S - 14	Bass
17	S	Alto
17	S(ii) - 9	Tenor
18	S(ii) + 4	Soprano
18	S(ii) – Variant - 7	Tenor
19	S(ii)	Alto
20	S - 12	Bass
21	S(ii) + 3	Soprano
22	S(ii) - 12	Bass

23	S(ii)	Soprano
24	S (ii) - 11	Bass
24	S (ii) - 2	Soprano
25	S (ii) - 10	Tenor
26	S (ii) - 6	Alto
26	S (ii) - 11	Tenor
27	S (ii) - 2	Soprano
28	S (ii) - 15	Bass
29	S (ii) - 16	Bass
30	S (ii) - 8	Alto
30	S (ii) - 3	Soprano
31	S (ii) - Inversion	Alto
32	S (ii) - 13	Tenor
33	S (ii) - 11	Tenor
33	S (ii) - Inversion	Soprano

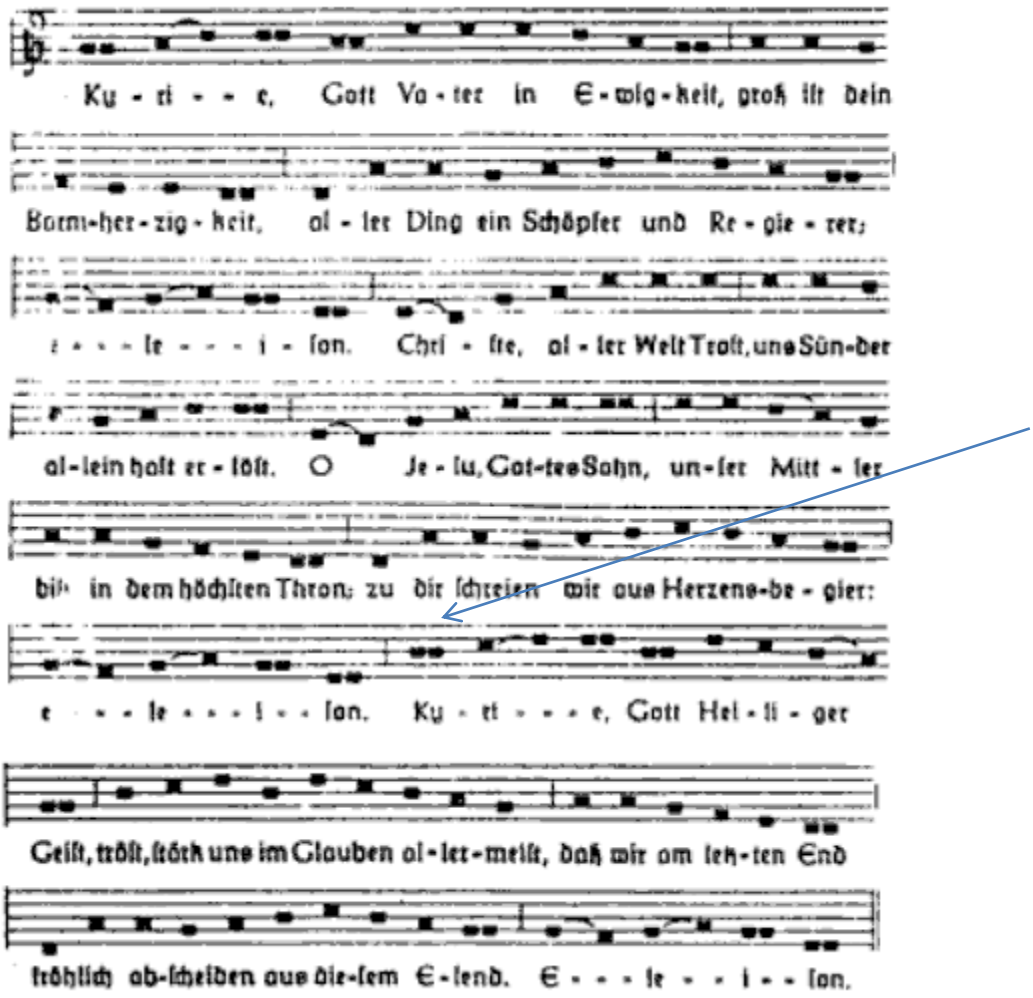
Whereas Bach's other fugal works for organ conform to a wide range of structural entities, in this case, there is a strong sense of vocally-inspired polyphony cast in the style of a *stretto* fugue. The fugue could also be quite easily sung by an SATB choir given the relative tessiture. Usually, one would often anticipate a countersubject to be rhythmically and melodically distinguishable to the subject, there is little in the way of change throughout this example. The emphasis is on polyphonic imitation and the notion of antiphony.

Illustration No.150 – BWV 674 – bb.1 – 11.



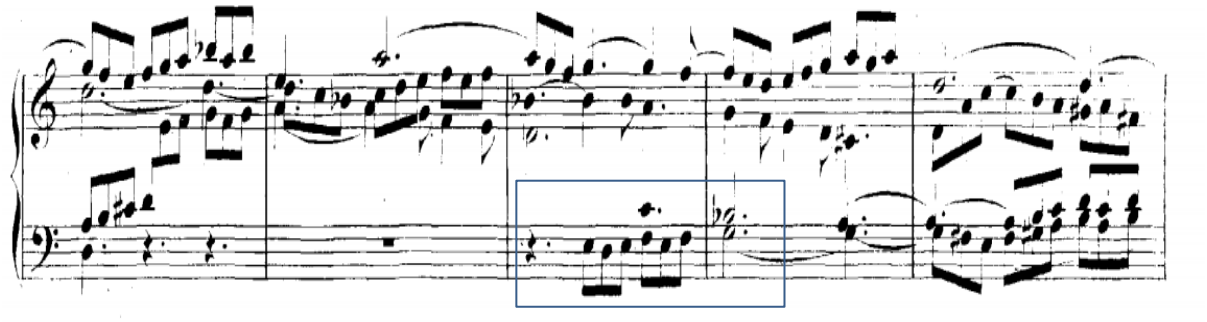
As such, the opening is similar to a canon as the imitation is closely adhered to. However, this fugue can be witnessed from a structural perspective on three different plains. Firstly, it is a fugue which is not noticeably formulaic in that there are clearly defined subject entries / countersubject entries through the mode of preparation or cadence. There are also no episodes which exhibit contrasting thematic material – all the material *arguably* originates from the first bar. Secondly, it can easily be suggested that the entire fugue is strategically based around two similar ideas (Subject – S and Subject (ii) – S (ii)). S occurs from the offset (b.1) Soprano and S (ii) is announced at b.3 by the Soprano (See Illustration No.150). The two subjects (albeit closely related) are the main thematic inspiration throughout. The provenance of these two 'subjects' of course derives from the plainsong:

Illustration No.150 b - *Kyrie* Plainsong



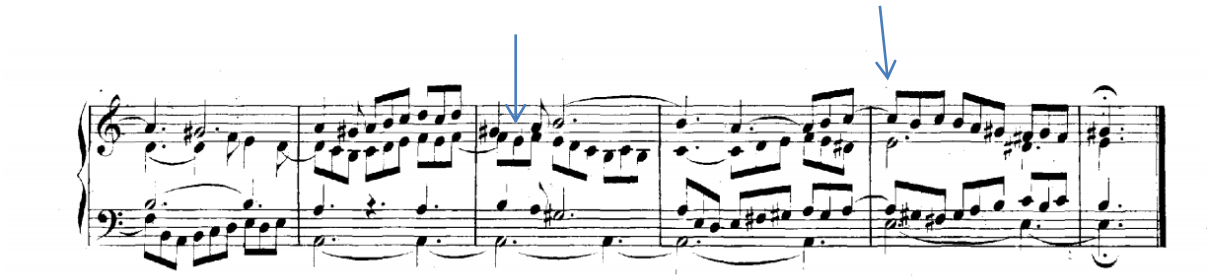
Finally, it is curious to note that at b.20, this is the last entry of the main subject (S) as every entry thereafter adheres to the contour of S (ii). Furthermore, it cannot be overlooked that this final subject entry occurs at the golden mean (33 X 0.618) = 20.394. The subject enters on the 2nd beat which is in effect 1/3 of the way through the bar and closest to 20.33.

Illustration No. 151 – BWV 674 – bb.18 – 22: b.20 contains the final entry of Subject 'S'.



If this structural device was intentional and it was deliberately crafted and positioned by Bach, the treatment of these two subjects is nonetheless of more profound interest. This is a movement which is almost exclusively based upon these two 'subjects'; there are no noteworthy episodes in this 'fugue' as practically each bar contains reference to one of these subjects. The only two exceptions to this are in b. 31 and b.33 where there are two literal inversions of subject (ii):

Illustration No. 152 – BWV 674 – b.29 – end.



Therefore, to what form does this fugue belong? It is a *stretto* fugue but the essence is that of vocally inspired polyphony and indeed antiphony. The entire work is based methodically upon the continuous recurrence of these two remarkably similar 'subjects'. Although only thirty three (another trinity reference?) bars in length, and *manualiter*, the sheer density of musical craftsmanship is praiseworthy indeed.

It is not really surprising that the compositional mastery of Bach's music should inspire the creative artist, that its philological and other problems should fascinate the scholar, or that its technical challenges should be taken up by the performer. What is astonishing, and in the end inexplicable, is that music which makes so few concessions to the listener should enjoy an immense popular following.[78]

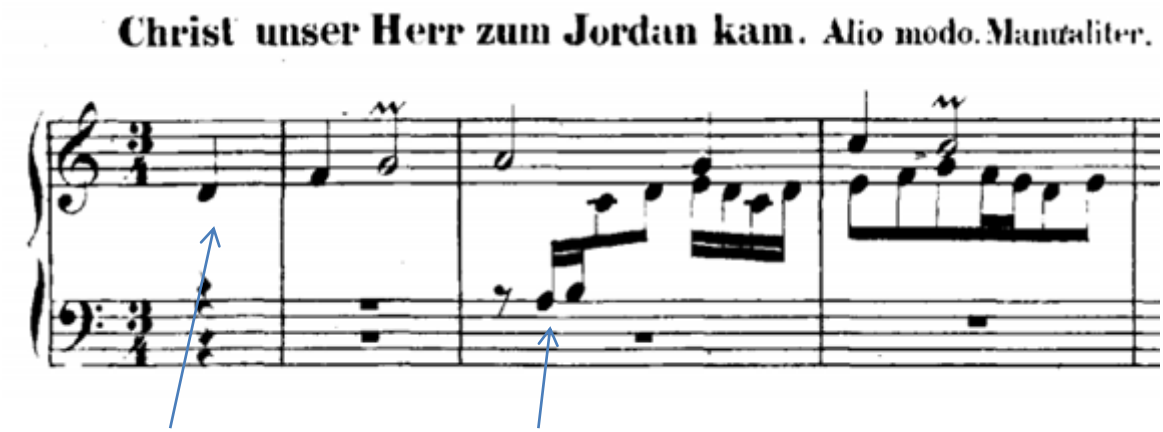
[78] Boyd, Malcolm, *Master Musicians – Bach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) p.221

CHAPTER 10

Christ Unser Herr zum Jordan Kam BWV 685 – The role of Sacred Imagery

The role of the *Chorale* cannot go unnoticed. Indeed, its influence was to cascade prolifically throughout Bach's career and here is another example of a *Chorale* inspiring another fugue albeit in a completely different guise to BWV 674.

Illustration No. 153 – BWV 685 – bb. 1 – 3.



Subject 'a' – based upon the *cantus firmus* . (S)

Subject 'b' – the recurring countersubject. (C/S)

Subject 'a' is inspired from the *cantus firmus* whilst subject 'b' is maintained as the recurring countersubject. Furthermore, whilst Subject 'a' does not prevail in every bar, in fact, there are relatively few entries; this fugue nevertheless has effectively no episodes except in b.20 which is almost completely void of the identity of both subjects. Every other bar contains thematic reference be it *melodically* or *rhythmically* to one of these subjects. The aspect of their inversion is structurally critical.

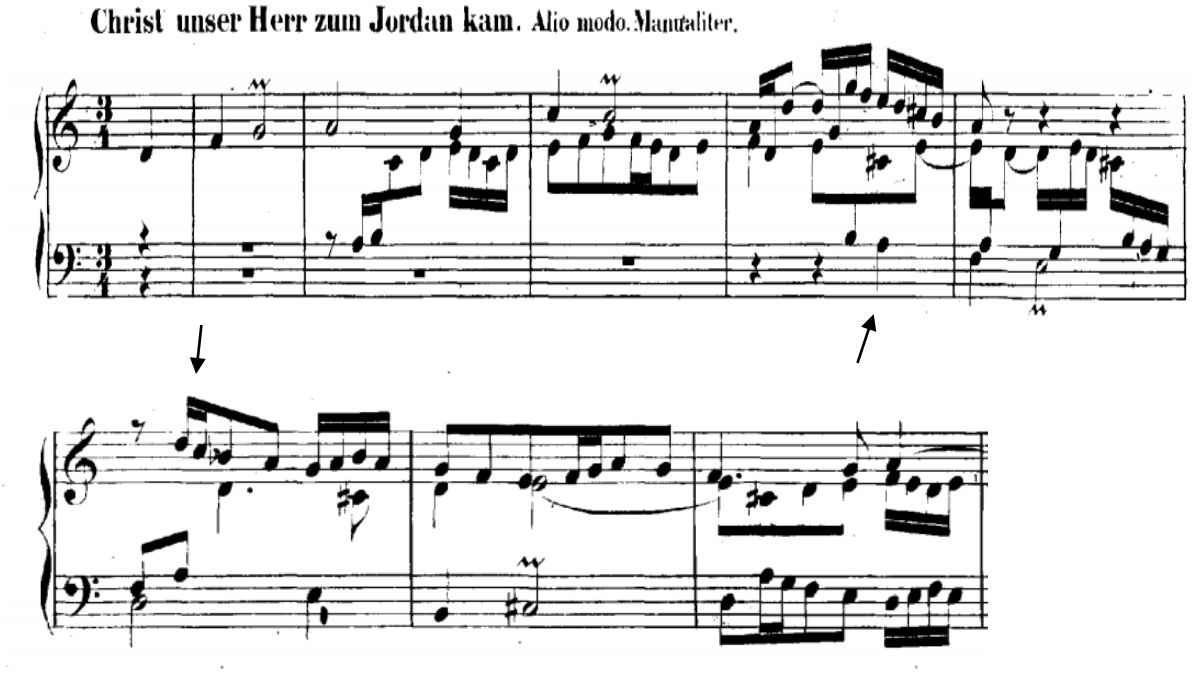
Table No. 20 - The subject entries throughout BWV 685

Measure	Device	Voice
1	S	Soprano
2	C/S	Alto
4	S (Inversion)	Bass

6	C/S (Inversion)	Soprano
10	S - 4	Alto
12	C/S - 5	Bass
14	S (Inversion) + 12	Soprano
16	C/S (Inversion) - 11	Bass
21	S - 8	Bass
22	C/S + 10	Soprano
23	S (Inversion) + 4	Alto
25	C/S (Inversion) - 6	Soprano

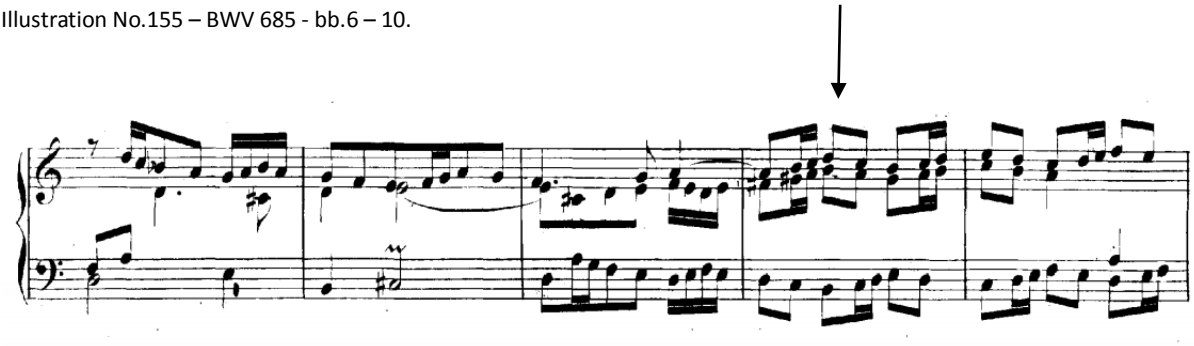
The prevalent procedure of both inverting subject 'a' and 'b' is the very defining feature of this movement – the Baptism of Christ. There are three entries of subject 'a' in *rectus* and three entries of subject 'a' using *inversus*. Moreover, subject 'b' (the recurring countersubject) follows the same structural plan. This is a fugue where not only are the subject and countersubject texturally invertible in *rectus* form, Bach also *inverts the melodic contour of both the subject and the countersubject* (*inversus*) to make them both texturally invertible too. One cannot simply say it is a double fugue because of a recurring countersubject. What is also of considerable fascination is that texturally, this distinctive symmetry portrays the sign of the cross:

Illustration No.154 – BWV 685 – bb.1 – 8, the inversion of the texture commencing at b.4



In addition, there are several occasions where Bach uses the *rhythmic outline* of subject 'b' briefly in sequential imitation and also, the notion of canon is briefly hinted at (bb.9 – 10):

Illustration No.155 – BWV 685 - bb.6 – 10.



What is remarkable is that one barely appreciates the true merit of this miniature unless one prolifically distils it. The aspect of simply inverting a subject and indeed its countersubject can appear to be a dry and mechanical process. Despite this, one of Bach's greatest gifts was not only to be able to design these contrapuntal matrices but more significantly, he allowed the music to convey a sense of personal expression and meaning through such a medium. In essence, he was able to combine the two. Furthermore, I would suggest that (perhaps ironically though no doubt intentionally) subject 'b' has a greater sense of melodic charm than the actual *cantus firmus*. In b.6 / 7, the inversion of subject 'b' certainly is more revealing than the preceding entry of the inverted subject 'a' in the bass. One step further, from an aesthetic and structural perspective, Bach throughout this miniature masterpiece is consistently juxtaposing the two subjects and their respective inversions and is consequently questioning their hierarchy to the overall structural design.

> Schweitzer regarded Bach as a devout Christian whose job as a church musician was to use every means at his disposal in order to convince the members of the congregations in the churches for which he wrote his cantatas of the truth and ethical importance of the texts he set. Because the messages to be imparted were complex in their implications, Bach resorted to multiple languages, or superimposed yet distinct sets of symbols, to convey meaning.[79]

To the lay ear or indeed a person who was purely 'listening' rather than studying the music, this music would undoubtedly appeal through its charm: the melodic lines are distinct and draw attention solely from that perspective. However, one of the most profound musical satisfactions when interpreting the music of Bach is to absorb as best as one possibly can the contrapuntal processes and then when performing the music, to be able to highlight and communicate these nuances to the listener. This example is not that technically demanding music to play, although it is from the perspective of contrapuntal construction: complexity yet subtlety. It is music for the

[79]Graubart, Michael, 'Decoding Bach - Emotion or Meaning', *The Musical Times Vol. 141 No.1872* (2000) p.10

contrapuntal connoisseur who can in turn appreciate the sacred and personal attributions. Moreover, many would not be curious to comprehend the contrapuntal architecture within: the density and particularly the notion of intricacy probably appeals to a minority. Put simply, it is not music which reveals itself to those who do not wish to seek its structural sophistication. This movement is typical of Bach's later compositional outlook which conveys not only musical beauty but also the sheer command of counterpoint. One also cannot fail to notice the inflection of the Trinity; there are *three* alternate entries of the subject and countersubject contrasted with *three* alternate entries of the subject and countersubject in their inverted forms.

Such attention to formulaic detail was not 'fashionable' in 1739 and the compositional style is thus unique at the time.

> Bach represented Church music and especially the learned counterpoint of canon and fugue, a centuries old craft that by now had developed such esoteric theories and procedures that some of its practitioners saw themselves as custodians of a quasi-divine art, even as weavers of the cosmic tapestry itself.[80]

[80]Gaines, James, *Evening in the Palace of Reason* (London, Harper Perennial, 2005) p.7

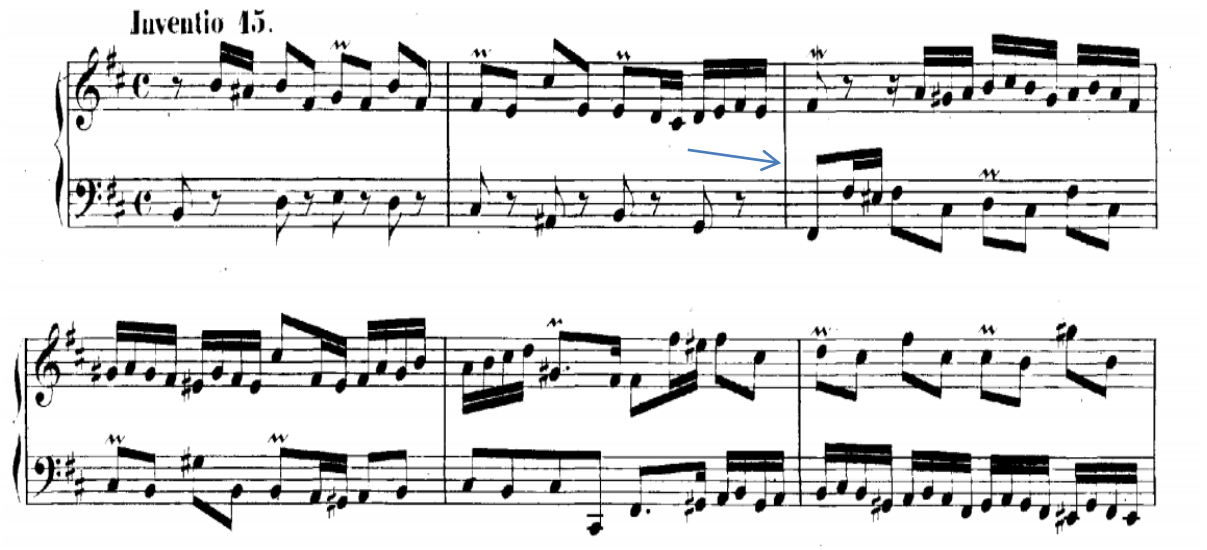
CHAPTER 11

Duetto No. 4 in A Minor BWV 805 – Two - part fugues.

The Duets in *Clavier Übung III* continue to be an enigma, not only because of their insertion but also the question as to whether there are hidden esoteric structures contained within. The question as to whether they are specifically for the organ has also been left unanswered. To my mind there are two immediate answers supporting the notion that they are for the organ. Firstly, the four duets exhibit comparable contrapuntal intricacy and technical subtlety to the *manualiter* settings of the chorale preludes. They are therefore highly likely to be contemporaneous. Secondly, as *Clavier Übung III* is systematically based on the Liturgical Mass, the placement of these four duets is important. They occur after all the liturgical settings and before the final movement, Fugue in Eb BWV 552 (ii). Thus, they were in all likelihood intended for use as voluntaries during communion.

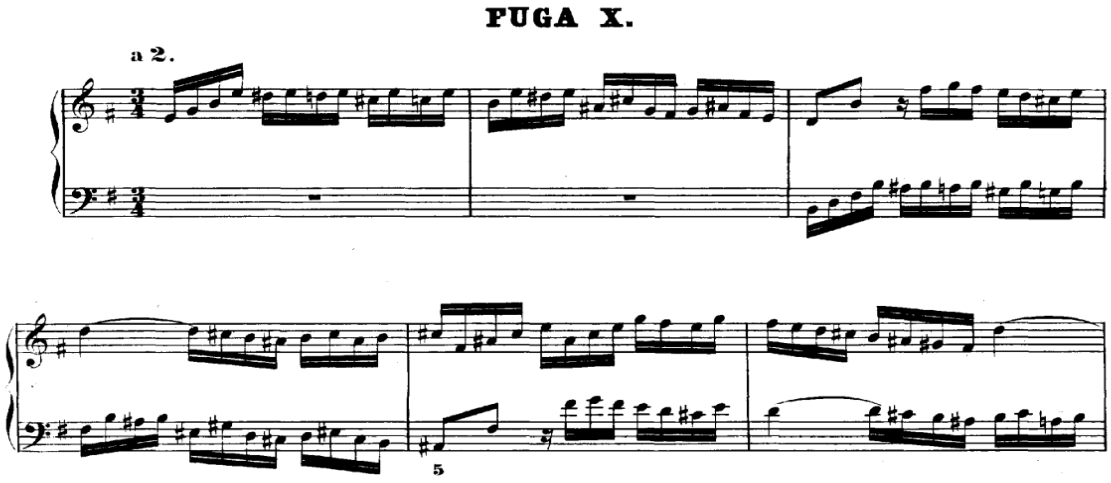
The levels of contrapuntal imitation vary and as such, the question as to the difference between a two – part invention and a two – part fugue is one aspect which is brought to the forefront. To differentiate between a two - part invention and a two - part fugue requires a certain degree of caution, not least because Bach's Two-part inventions (BWV 772-786) contain a wealth of imitative resources not dissimilar to those found in a fugue. The term 'invention' was used regardless of the compositional procedures. The extract below is from Invention No.15 in B Minor. Whilst it is not classified as a fugue, the overlap in compositional styles cannot be ignored.

Illustration No.156 – BWV 786 – bb.1 – 6.



The only distinctly and specifically labelled Two-part fugue in the Forty Eight Preludes and Fugues is the E Minor Fugue from Book 1 – BWV 855(ii).

Illustration No. 157 – BWV 855 (ii) – bb.1 – 6.



The counterpoint is directly imitative and the same feature can be associated with these duets and in particular, BWV 804. Indeed the duets are for manuals only and could easily be interpreted as written for harpsichord or clavichord. Other suggestions as to their insertion concern a representation of the four seasons, the four gospels or the very idea that it brings the total number of movements in the collection to twenty-seven. (I would argue that Bach would not simply insert movements for any of these frankly mundane reasons as there is no sense of specificity). However, David Humphreys' claim that the Four Duets are linked with sacred reasoning proves to be the most relevant and imaginative of all commentaries, though still potentially doubtful nonetheless:

Bach links the general plan of the Duetti with the *four teaching precepts* from the preface of Luther's Lesser Catechism. These precepts are placed immediately before the doctrinal sections of the Catechism which dictates the plan of Bach's Chorale preludes. Like the precepts, Bach's Duetti are four in number, and they contain clues deliberately planted by the composer to indicate that they portray the teacher-pupil relationship, which is treated verbally by Luther. Thus the Duetti, un-explained until now, drop neatly into place as part of the overall plan of the whole set.[81]

[81] Humphreys, David**,** *The Esoteric Structure of Bach's Clavier Übung III* (Cardiff: Cardiff University Press, 1983) p.10

Illustration No.158 – A Translation of Martin Luther's fourth teaching precept.

Because the tyranny of the Pope is now at an end, they will no longer visit the sacrament and hold it in scorn. For all that you must urge it strongly, but note this: we must never compel anybody to believe or take the sacrament, or impose a rule as to time and place, but preach in such a way that they discipline themselves and immediately compel us, the priests, to administer the sacrament. We can do this by telling them: If anybody does not visit or desire the sacrament at least once of four times a year, that signifies that he despises the sacrament and is no Christian…

If anybody pays little heed to the sacrament, that is a sign that he does not acknowledge sin, the flesh, the devil, the world, death, peril and hell, that is, he believes in nothing although he is up to his ears in it and is doubly of the devil. Likewise, he may not expect grace, life, paradise, heaven, Christ, God or any good. For if he believed that he had all this evil and the evil is remedied and all this good is given. Even him we should not compel by rule to visit the sacrament, but he himself should come running helter-skelter (**gelaufen und gerennet**), discipline himself and urge you that you should give him the sacrament….

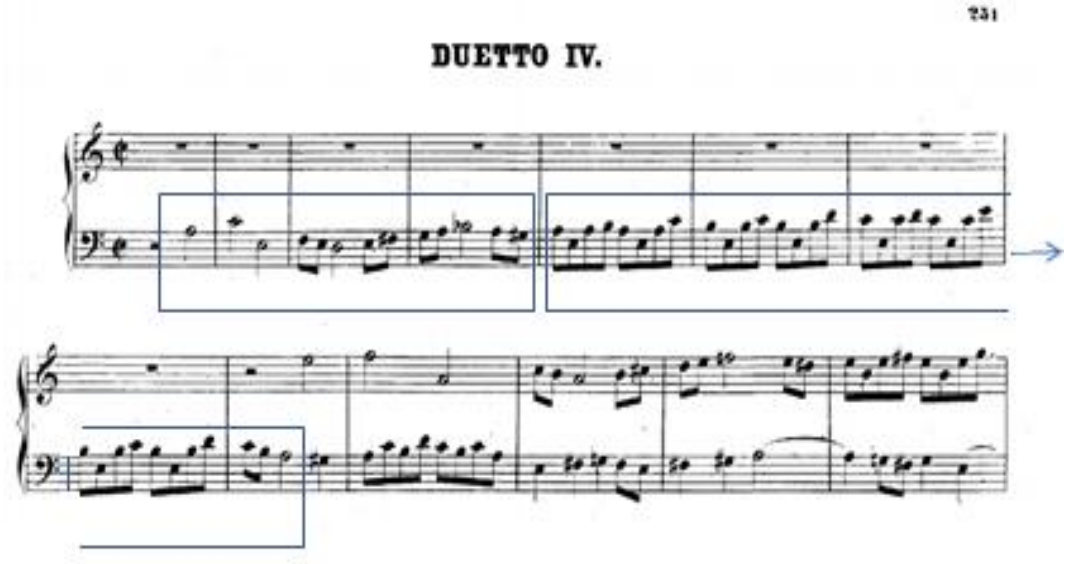
As a consequence, it is implied that what Luther is professing is that whilst a law cannot be introduced by the Pastor, those who do not respect faith and the blessed sacraments are equal to the devil and not followers of Christ. Subsequently, this Duet could be seen as a depiction of the above and is undoubtedly a two - part fugue. It is not purely a two - part invention as there is a clearly defined subject and its answer form; both forms of the subject have a recurring countersubject upon their statements. Yet, the subject and answer form entries never modulate. There is always a close adherence tonally and thematically and as such, perhaps this can be seen as an expression of upholding faith.

Table No.21 - The subject entries throughout BWV 805

Measure	Device	Voice
1	S	Bass
9	S (Answer form)	Treble
9	C/S (i)	Bass
32	S (Abridged form) - 8	Bass
33	S	Treble
34	C/S (ii)	Bass
41	S (Answer form)	Bass
41	C/S (i) + 8	Treble
70	S (Answer form)	Treble
71	C/S (i)	Bass
95	S (Abridged form) + 8	Treble
95	C/S (ii) (Abridged form) +8	Bass
97	S	Bass
97	C/S (ii) + 15	Treble

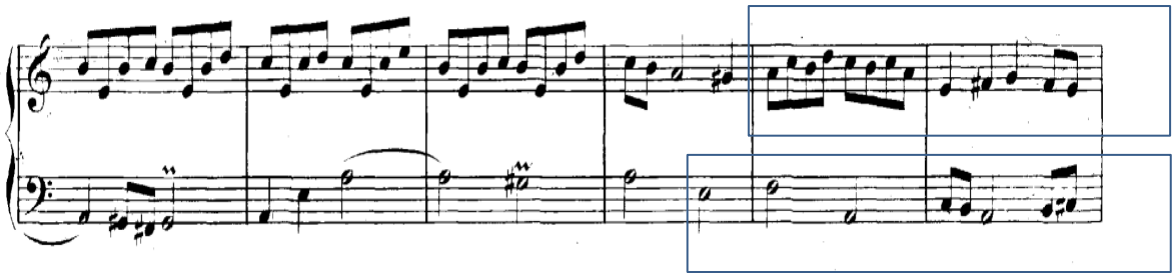
With reference to the fugal subject, it is lengthy but it can nonetheless be divided into two distinct and differentiating halves, the notion of sequence is unmistakeable:

Illustration No. 159 - BWV 805 – bb.1 – 13.



The significance of this fugue is Bach's ability to again use exceedingly little thematic material (almost to the point of thematic austerity?) but to be able to reinterpret and transform this material seamlessly throughout: 'Yet another fugue for two voices which, by a deft system of dove-tailing, leaves only the final cadence (the last five bars) as showing any freedom from repetition or working – out.' [82] This is two-part counterpoint which is so effortlessly and intrinsically invertible. At b.41/ 42, the 'answer' form of the subject re-enters but this time in the lower voice, the first countersubject in the higher voice:

Illustration No.160 – BWV 805 – bb.38 – 43 with the inversion of texture beginning at b.42



Beneath are two systematic passages of episodic material which are subsequently texturally recast throughout. Episodic idea No.1 - commencing at b.18, is restated and texturally inverted beginning at b.50:

Illustration No. 161 – BWV 805– bb.14 – 19.

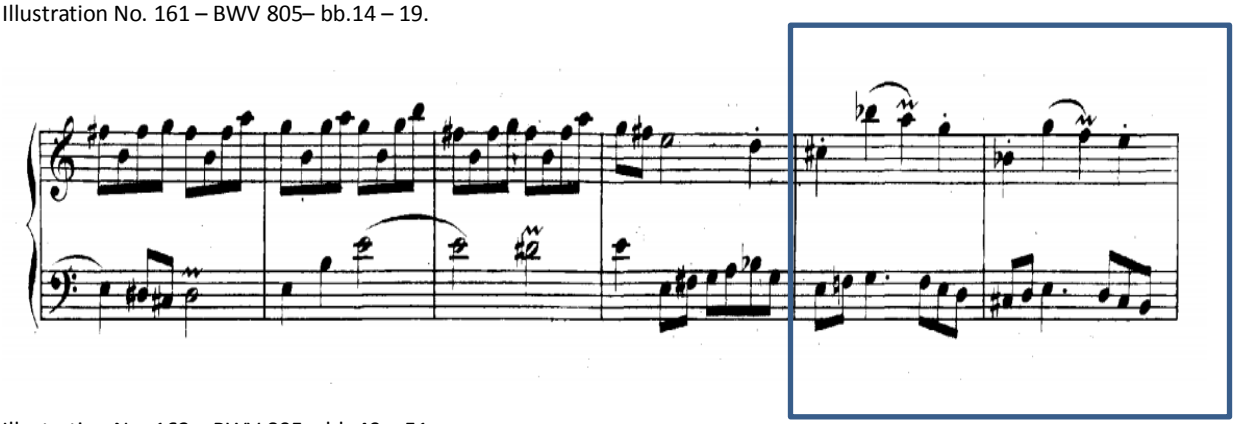
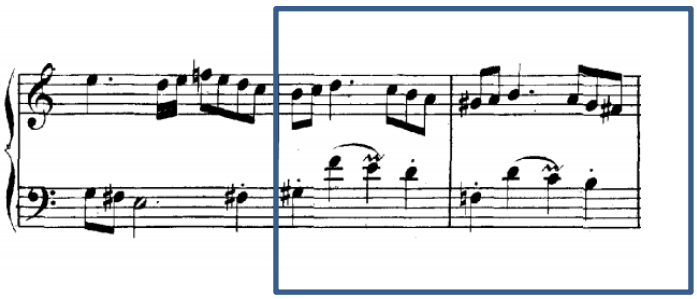


Illustration No. 162 – BWV 805 – bb.49 – 51.



[82] Denny, James, '*A Talk to the Incorporated Association of Organists'* (1969) *(UNPUBLISHED)* p.26

Episodic idea No.2 - commencing at b.26, is then restated and texturally inverted beginning at b.58

Illustration No. 163 – BWV 805 - bb.26 – 27.

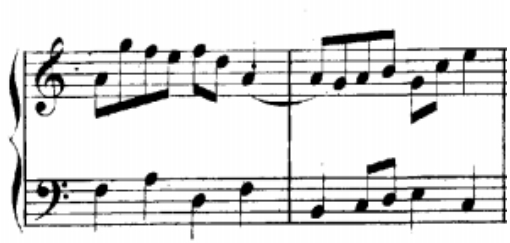
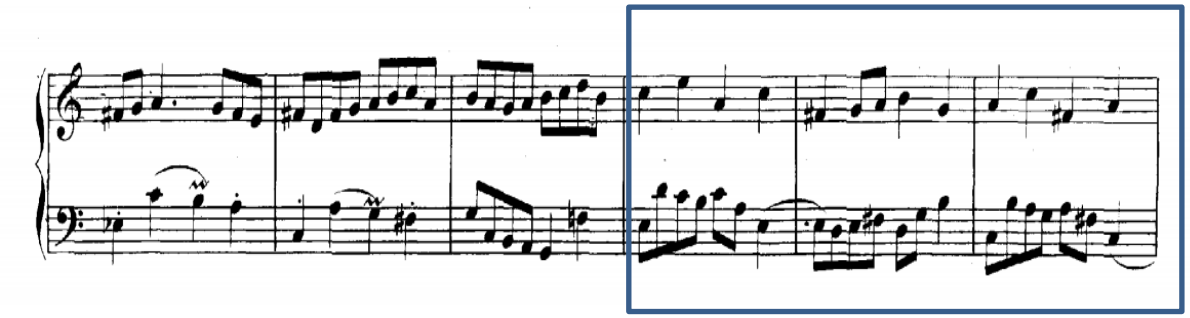
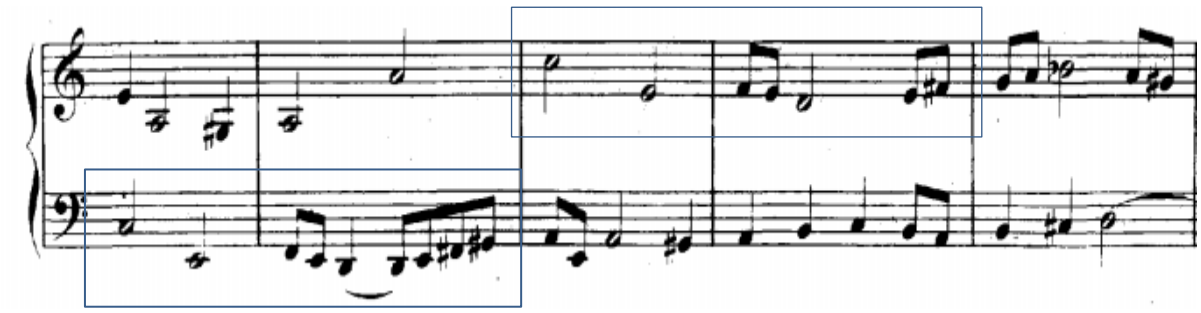


Illustration No. 164 – BWV 805 – bb.55 – 60.



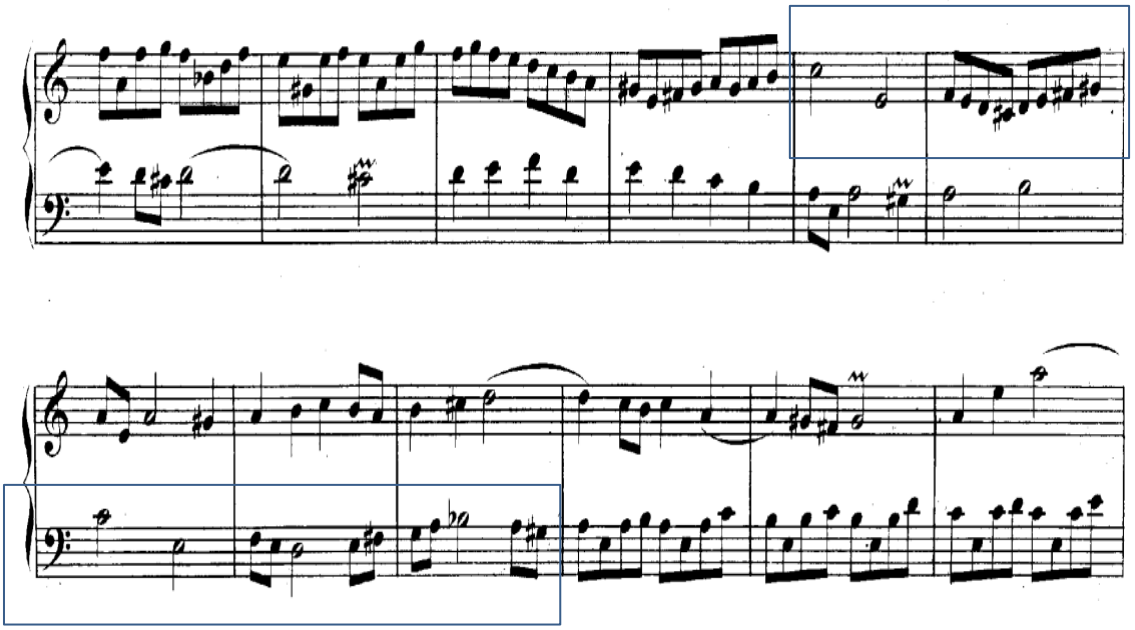
In close adherence with Luther's teachings, the subject does not make an appearance in any other key than either the tonic or answer form. In addition, the episodes are there to potentially illustrate and capture the essence of the wandering away from the path of righteousness, and arguably the recurrence of the same thematic material even during the episodes is further symbolism that the same themes that coax human faith will always recur. The use of *stretto* for the first time, perhaps symbolising unity, takes place at b.32.

Illustration No.165 – BWV 805 – bb.32 – 36.



The second and indeed conclusive use of *stretto* occurs in bb.95 – 99 (albeit with a modification and a textural inversion of the *stretto* mentioned above). Curiously, there is little in the way of preparation concerning a 'final entry' – it is though their final statements and purpose is to be deliberately understated.

Illustration No. 166 – BWV 805 – bb.91 – 102.



It is conceivable that *stretto,* which is rarely used, is to portray and present thematic unity and indeed the importance of the faith being maintained and to symbolise the unity. Whilst this could of course be doubtful, Bach would probably not have meant it to be so, and it is highly likely that such significance is pertinent to this work. We know from Bach's mentality that he composed with deliberate intent and purpose. Bach would have been fully aware of these four separate prefaces. Whilst the *manualiter* settings of the Kyrie cycle were esoterically linked by their rising time signatures (3/6/9), here the tonality ascends with each Duet – a reference that simply cannot be ignored.

Table No. 22 – The rising key signatures throughout the Duets BWV 802 – 805.

MOVEMENT	TONALITY
Duetto No.1 - BWV 802	E Minor
Duetto No.2 - BWV 803	F Major
Duetto No. 3 - BWV 804	G Major
Duetto No. 4 - BWV 805	A Minor

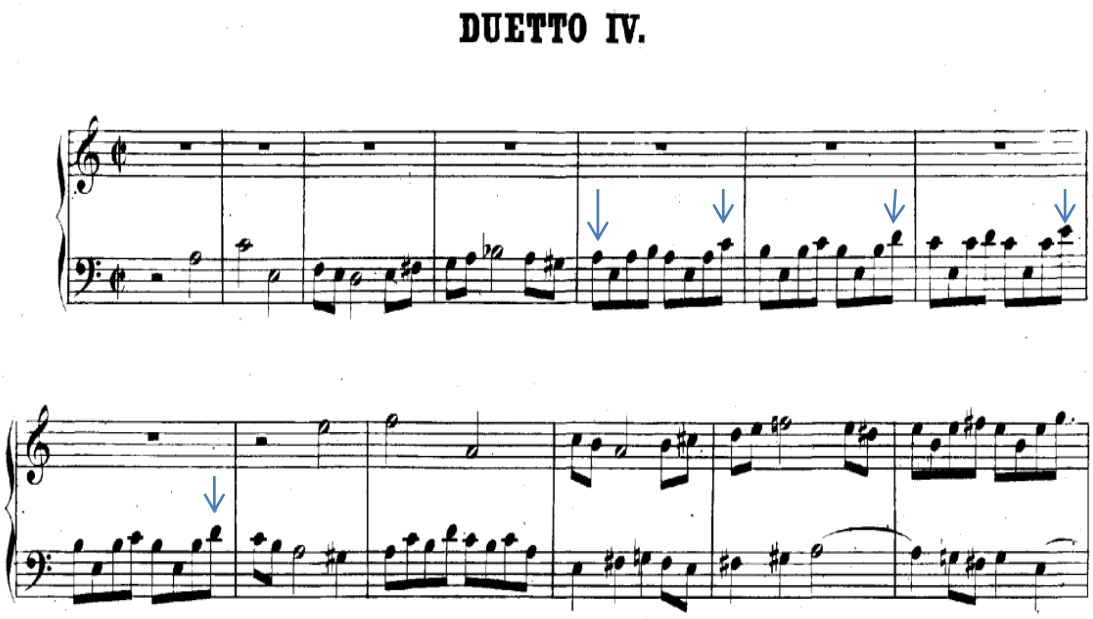
A further cyclic tonal similarity can be drawn with the end of the *manualiter* Kyrie cycle and the rising triadic key signatures in the Gloria Cycle:

Table No.23 – The rising key signatures throughout BWV 672 – 677.

MOVEMENT	TONALITY
BWV 672 / 673 / 674	*Phrygian Mode* on E
BWV 675	F Major
BWV 676	G Major
BWV 677	A Major

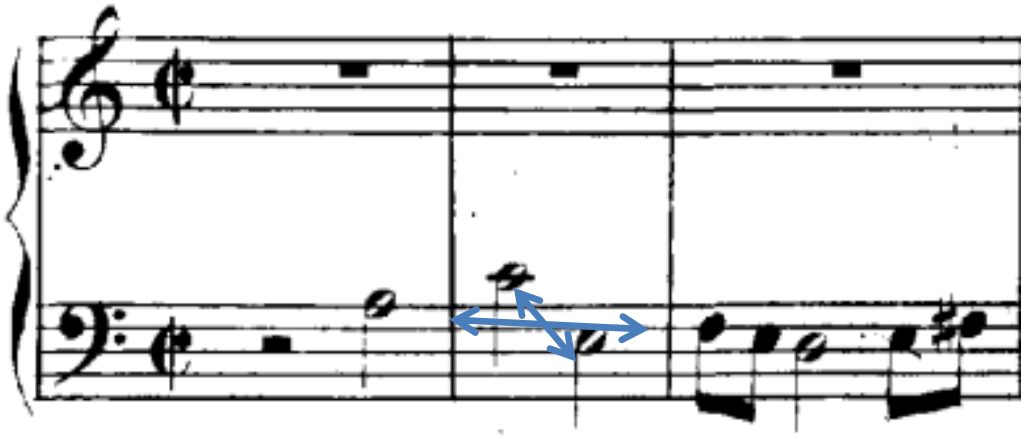
It is true that Bach's mind was boundless with his conscious ability of being able to magnify and symbolize the meaning of faith, and this carefully worked out two-part fugue illustrates distinctly what Bach desired to convey: the strengthening of faith. An additional aspect which Robin Leaver points out is the hidden *cantus firmus* '*Christ Unser Herr zum Jordan Kam'* outline in the second half of the subject:

Illustration No.167 – BWV 805 – bb. 1 – 13.



Moreover, the opening melodic outline of the subject can be interpreted with the inclusion of the sign of the cross:

Illustration No.168 – BWV 805 - bb.1 – 3.



The cross motive is very appropriate in the Duet, for when Luther speaks of daily prayer in the *Small Catechism* he encourages the use of the sign of the cross. Furthermore, the connection with the Baptism Hymn makes the sign doubly suitable because the sign of the cross is closely associated with Baptism.[83]

To find such subtle encryptions again cannot be ignored. Leaver's findings are of course initially doubtful but having spoken with Robert Leaver recently at a conference in Durham, Bach's music contains an overwhelming source of hidden messages and symbolism. Of course, many are indeed subtle and can quite easily be overlooked. However, such musical riddles can be interpreted and located if one knows where and how to look.

[83]Leaver, Robin, 'Bach's Clavier Übung III : Some Historical and Theological Considerations' in *Organ year book* (1975) p.29

CHAPTER 12

Fugue in Eb Major BWV 552 (ii) - Trinitarian Symbolism and Structural Architecture.

Whilst the respective preceding Prelude in Eb Major, BWV 552 (i) depicts the Trinity fundamentally through a *thematically symbolic* perspective, the subsequent fugue has a three-fold plan: three fundamental themes, a three-part structure and a *symbolic unification* of all three themes. It is not a regular triple subject fugue (Bach could easily have done this, however e.g. BWV 582), but rather, the aim is to convey the importance of symbolism. In the third and final section, whilst the third subject S (iii) is abundantly clear, the other two are represented through their melodic and rhythmic identity: they are not treated in regular invertible counterpoint nor are they always a direct correlation to their previous guises; S (ii), in particular, must be seen as the origin for the running semiquavers in this final section as so often there is a resemblance through the outline. Moreover, it is the summation of the entire *Clavier Übung III* and captivates the essence of the Trinitarian 'three – in – one' aspect so clearly but of course, it points out the mysticism of the Trinity. The table that follows is somewhat more complex than previous examples. In the third section, the 1st and 2nd subjects are introduced often in fragmentary forms and as such, have been labelled as *Fragment* when introduced. Moreover, in this final section, I have highlighted only their reference within the texture rather than pin-pointing their exact intervallic relationship to the initial entry.

Table No. 24 - The subject entries throughout BWV 552 (ii).

(Given the different nature of each of the subjects and permutations, the intervallic relationships do *not* all stem from S in b.1 E.g. S (Variant) + 4 in b.62 stems from the first instance of S (Variant) – b.59.

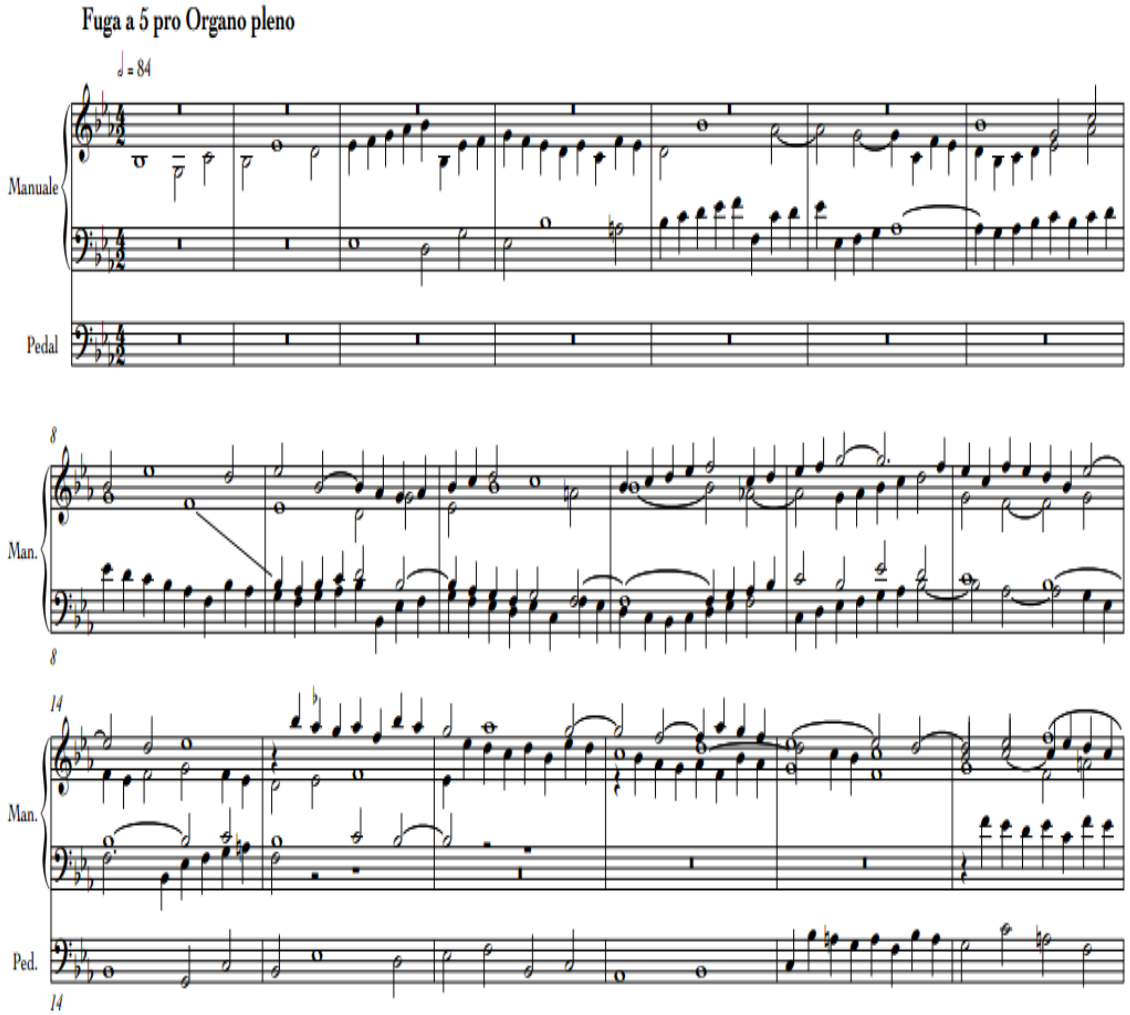
Measure	Device	Voice
1	S	Tenor
3	S (Answer form) - 5	Bass
7	S + 8	Soprano
9	S + 4	Alto
14	S - 8	Bass (Ped.)
21	S + 8	Alto
21	S + 11	Soprano

22	S	Bass
26	S + 7	Soprano
31	S - 8	Bass (Ped.)
31	S + 4	Tenor
37	S (ii)	Bass
39	S (ii) + 5	Tenor
43	S (ii) + 8	Alto
45	S (ii) + 12	Soprano
47	S(ii) - Inverted Sequential Treatment	Alto
49	S(ii) – Inverted Sequential Treatment - 5	Tenor
51	S(ii) – Inverted Sequential Treatment - 9	Bass
54	S (ii) + 5	Tenor
56	S (ii) + 9	Soprano
59	S (ii) - 4	Bass
59	S (Variant)	Tenor
61	S (ii)	Tenor
62	S (Variant) + 4	Alto
64	S(ii) Inverted Sequential Treatment - 8	Bass
67	S(ii) + 9	Soprano
69	S (Variant) + 5	Alto
69	S (ii) + 11	Soprano

71	S (ii) Inversion Sequential Treatment + 2	Alto
73	S (Variant) + 2	Tenor
75	S(ii) Inversion Sequential Treatment – 5 (from Eb)	Tenor
77	S (Variant) - 3	Bass
82	S (iii)	Bass
83	S (iii) + 5	Alto
85	S (iii) + 8	Soprano
86	S (iii) - 5	Bass
87	S (iii) + 12	Soprano
88	S (ii) – *Fragment*	Tenor
90	S (ii) - *Fragment*	Tenor
90	S (i) – *Fragment*	Tenor
91	S (iii) + 14	Soprano
92	S (iii) - 4	Bass (Ped).
93	S (iii) + 5	Alto
94	S (i) – *Fragment*	Bass (Ped).
94	S (iii) + 10 (Extended)	Soprano
94	S (ii) - *Fragment*	Bass
95	S (ii) – *Fragment*	Bass
97	S(iii) + 2	Tenor
99	S (ii) - *Fragment*	Bass
100	S (ii) - *Fragment*	Soprano

101	S (i) - *Fragment*	Bass (Ped.)
101	S (iii) – 3	Tenor
102	S (iii) + 10	Soprano
102	S (ii) – *Fragment*	Alto
104	S (iii) - Extended	Bass (Ped.)
104	S (ii) – *Fragment*	Soprano
105	S (iii)	Tenor
107	S (iii) + 12	Soprano
108	S (i) – *Fragment*	Bass (Ped).
108	S (ii) – *Fragment*	Bass
108	S(i) - *Fragment*	Soprano
111	S (iii) + 12	Alto
112	S (iii) + 8	Tenor
113	S (iii) + 4	Bass
113	S (ii) – *Fragment*	Soprano
114	S (i) – *Fragment*	Bass (Ped.)
114	S (iii) - 2	Bass
115	S (ii) – *Fragment*	Bass

Illustration No.169 – BWV 552 (ii) – bb.1 – 19.



From a thematic perspective, as just mentioned, there are three themes within this fugue. The first theme is relatively understated and is not dissimilar to that of a chorale, sometimes referred to as the English Hymn tune 'St Anne,' by William Croft (1678 – 1727). The question as to whether Bach knew of this melody and the connection with William Croft has yet to be proven. However, given that William Croft was a contemporary of Handel and that Bach knew of Handel's compositions, therein lies a potential connection. The fugal style harks back again to the *ricercare* although the counterpoint in this case is more tightly woven. Whilst the countersubject always appears to be initially regular, the statements are never quite identical: there are two separate melodic variations when the 3rd and 5th voices enter. Moreover, thematically speaking, the countersubject is not decisive compared to the forthcoming subjects. From a symbolic perspective, it could be argued that this first subject is **'the Son'**: it is humble but also modestly profound. Concerning the five – part voicing, there is undoubtedly an added sense of thickened and richer texture which in itself allows for fuller statements of specific chords (e.g. with the 5th or the octave doubled) and also

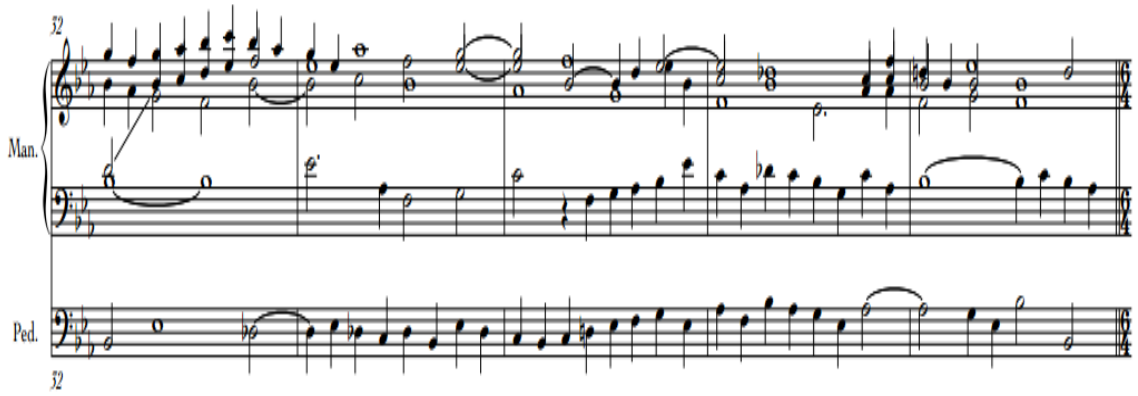
greater flexibility with the internal voice leading. Timothy Corlis' Article *Analysis of Spectra in J.S. Bach's Prelude and Fugue BWV 552 (2006*) provides a wealth of evidence suggesting Bach's acute perception of pitch and the fundamentals of harmonic overtone relationships. Bach was renowned as an authority on organ building and he knew the permutations of the harmonic series that would ensue from respective harmonies and indeed specific registrations. It is not surprising that *Organo Pleno* is denoted and this on a German organ whereby the scaling is mostly equal between ranks and the intent being polyphonic by design (unlike the vast majority of English organs), the richness would have been undoubtedly perceived. I am also in no doubt that the key of Eb Major must have sounded far richer by comparison with other keys as indeed many of the organs were not tuned to equal temperament. Also, it is perhaps of no surprise that C Minor as the relative minor predominates more than any other key for the other Preludes / Fantasia / Passacaglia and Fugues for Organ by Bach (BWV 537, 546, 549, 562, 574 and 582). Bach must have known the acoustical and scientific properties of each key regarding the temperament for the specific instrument and could compose accordingly to maximise the harmonic potential.

> The sciences of registration attributed to J.S. Bach by C.P.E. Bach would have required a formidable knowledge of the ear's reconstructive perception of timbre and pitch resulting from the complex wave of a full organ registration…. In a performance on full organ, at significant amplitude, the production of audible and upper partials (as many as sixty harmonics where the fundamental is low) would have had a significant impact on the auditory experience.[84]

At the coda of the first section (see Illustration No.170 – overleaf), Bach fully exploits the contrapuntal and harmonic manoeuvrability of the five – part texture.

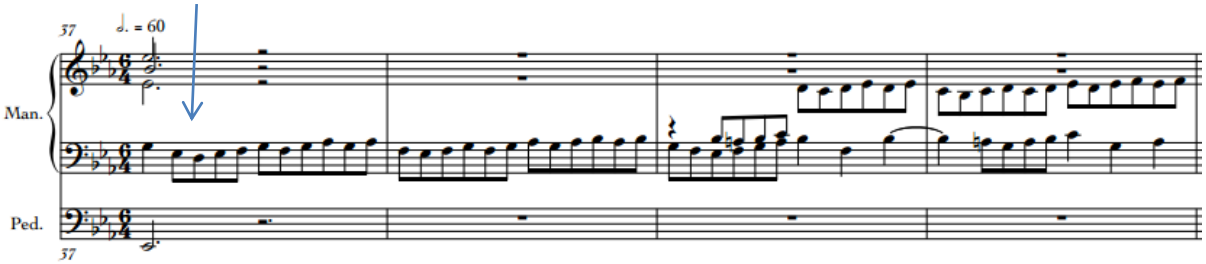
[84] Corlis, Timothy**,** 'Analysis of Spectra in J.S. Bach's Prelude and Fugue BWV 552' in *Riemenschneider Bach Institute, Vol 37. No.1* (2006), p.38

Illustration No.170 – BWV 552 (ii) – bb. 32 – 36.



The second fugal subject is very different in nature and is characterised by running quavers. Again from a symbolic perspective, this could be interpreted as **'the Holy Spirit'**. It is virtually ceaseless from a rhythmic perspective. In addition, it is curious to note that the pedal never enters and thus supports the notion of an alleviated being that advances with ease. However, what is important to note with this second fugue is that it becomes a double fugue. It is not a double fugue to the extent that the countersubject becomes the secondary subject: rather, the previous **'Son'** fugal subject returns albeit in syncopated form and is fundamental to the compositional fabric as it unfolds. As will be revealed further in the analysis, there is a canny underlying structural plan to the fugue. It is no coincidence that the two themes are united and combined half way (final beat of b.59) through this second section (bb.37-82). As mentioned in the introduction, there is no strict definition of a 'double fugue' and it is also a rare compositional instance in a Baroque fugue where the time signature changes let alone the very character of the thematic material which follows:

Illustration No. 171 – BWV 552 (ii) – bb.37 – 40.



Whilst it is clear that there is an exposition in four parts with this new subject, there is also what appears to be a counter exposition using the inversion of this new subject. It is not a compelling

example as there are only three voices which enter using the inversion. However, their presence cannot fail to be noticed and as such, these entries are of significance in exhibiting the thematic derivation.

Illustration No.172 - BWV 552 (ii) – bb.47 – 51: Inversion of the 'Holy Spirit'.

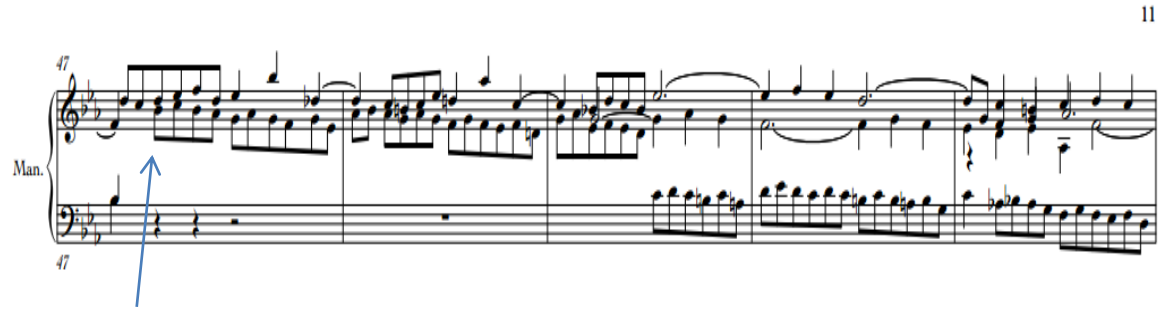
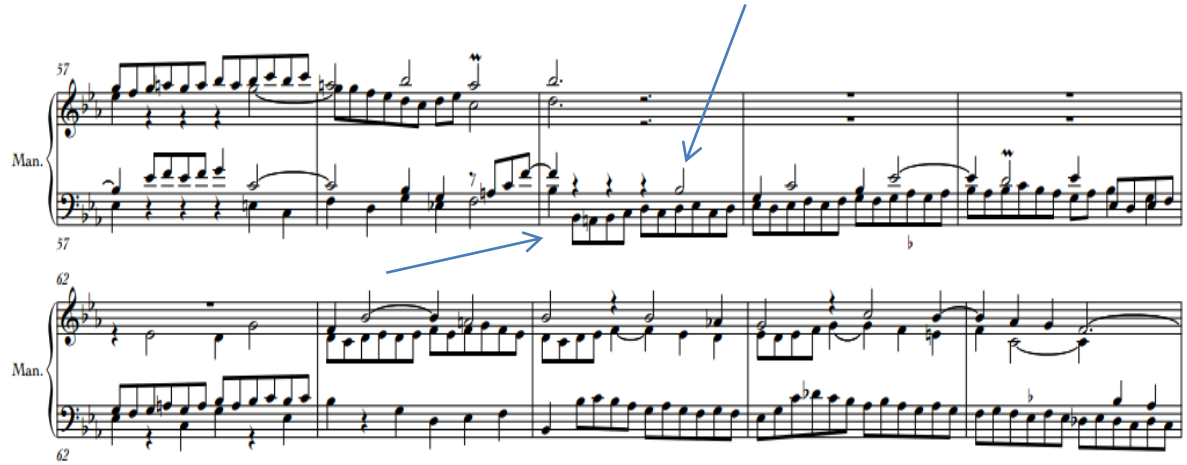
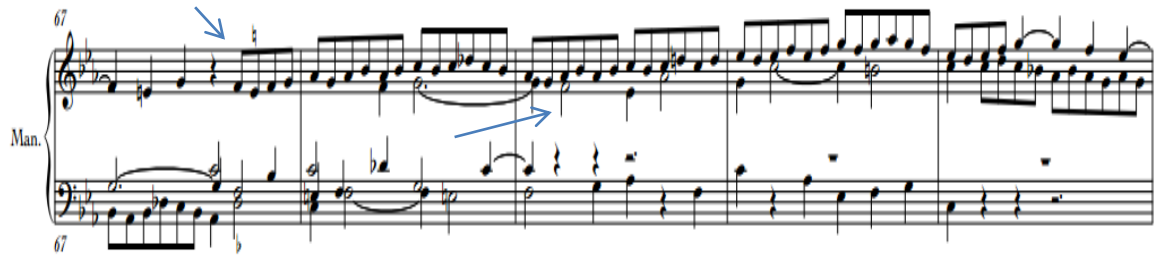


Illustration No.173 - BWV 552 (ii) – bb.57 – 66: the combination of the two subjects.



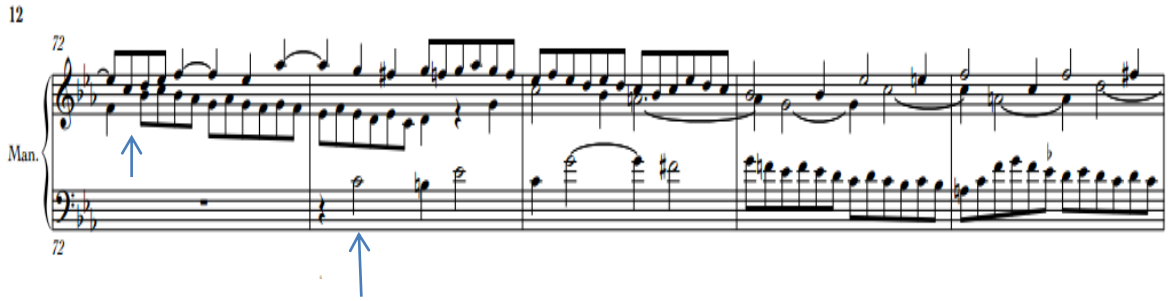
From b.59, Bach reintroduces **'the Son'** alongside the **'Holy Spirit'** so that the two are now combined with each successive entry. However, the entries do not follow that of a typical exposition –the third combinatorial entry is steered briefly towards F Minor then to C Minor.

Illustration No.174 - BWV 552 (ii) – bb.67 – 71.



In addition, it is interesting to note that Bach also combines the syncopated **'Son'** subject with the inversion of the **'Holy Spirit'**.

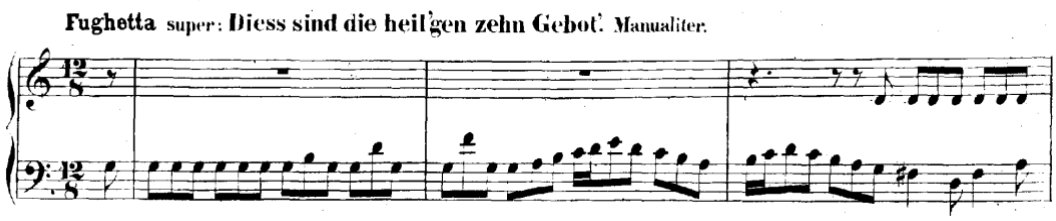
Illustration No.175 – BWV 552 (ii) – bb.72 – 76.



To this extent, this second fugal passage does therefore contain three distinct ideas although they are never used with strict triple invertibility. Thus, it is only during the third of the three passages that the symbolism becomes distinctly more apparent.

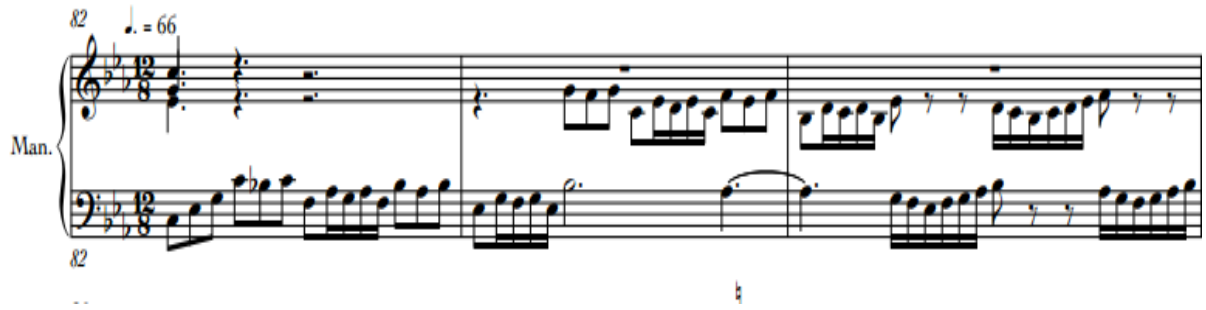
The third fugal subject, again introduced with another change in time signature now to 12/8, anticipates the form of a *Gigue*. Not only is it very rare to have three changes of time signature within a fugue, but also, there are relatively few fugues in the style of a *Gigue* though another example in *Clavier Übung III* is *Diess sind die heiligen zehen Gebot* BWV 679. There is an unequivocal symbolic representation in this fugue through the ten statements of the subject thereby symbolising the Ten Commandments.

Illustration No.176 – BWV 679 – bb.1 – 3.



It is possible to interpret this following theme as **'God the Father'** as it is the most rhythmically didactic and stately. However, the most important aspect here is that the previous two fugal subjects are also restated albeit rhythmically and melodically altered. Subsequently, this is a tri-partite fugue with the final section containing a principal subject with the other two subjects treated as *textural accompaniments*.

Illustration No. 177 - BWV 552 (ii) – bb.82 - 84 - the third subject is introduced.

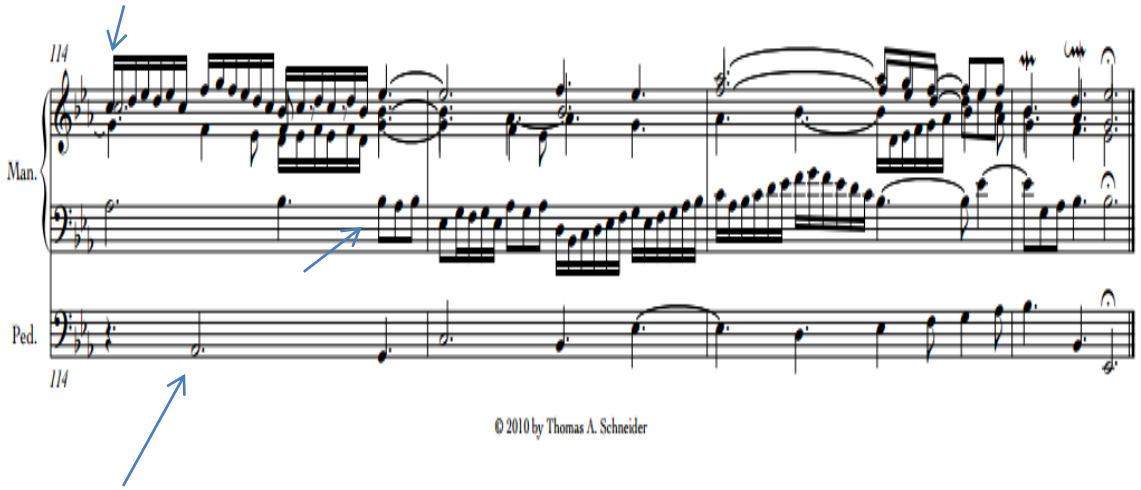


Again, the three subjects are not introduced one after the other as each voice enters in succession. Instead, they are introduced at separate stages. Furthermore, whilst there is some slight melodic variation of **'the Holy Spirit'** as well as being in rhythmic diminution, the effect is nevertheless very clear with the running of the semiquavers. However, it is true that the two themes are not used in their original rhythmic or sometime precise melodic guises. Bach was perfectly capable of uniting three subjects in strict succession as his prolific use of triple invertible counterpoint in many of the keyboard works would undeniably prove. The essence here is very much upon the importance of symbolism. It is a question of how the mind and ear perceive this unification.

'The Son' is treated with rhythmic augmentation and is similar to a *cantus firmus.* Whilst on the one hand, this is not 'strict' fugal writing in that the melodic contours are repeated exactly, the *symbolic* effect could not be clearer as all three subjects are united:

Illustration No. 178 – BWV 552 (ii) bb.99 – 104, all three subjects united in the key of C Minor (relative minor).

Illustration No. 179 – BWV 552(ii) b.114 – end, all three 'subjects' united in the key of Eb Major (tonic).



Until now, no analyst has made a *compelling* account dealing with the above Trinitarian aspect. Peter Williams' account is also not truly convincing: 'Bach makes no attempt to combine all three subjects, which would not be impossible if the aim were to present Three-In-One.'[85] Certainly, there is a degree of variation but the symbolic effect seems resolutely clear. It draws back to the idea that 'fugue' is a *style* of composition and that subjects are 'fugued'. One further Trinitarian aspect which analysts have carefully revealed is that each fugue's length is governed by multiples of 3: 36, 45 and 36.

> Yet there is an uncanny structure behind the Fugue: the number of bars 36,45,36 makes 72: 45 or 1.618 : 1 (Golden Section), while the middle section itself is divided at its midpoint, i.e. a conspicuous moment (b.59) at which the first theme modified enters against the second theme disguised. This produces two further Golden Sections, 36:22.5 and 22.5: 36.[86]

Above all, this fugue is a masterpiece of contrapuntal and structural architecture and is a very fitting conclusion to *Clavier Übung III*.Of course, the fact that none of the above can be distinctly proven has often led some to regard *Clavier Übung III* as a collection of pieces enshrined with riddles and personal attributions. There is no treaty which exists in Bach's hand of his deliberate intention to convey and include such *gematria* and other such hidden meanings. The peculiarity of some of the movements also suggests a composer who was becoming obsessed with counterpoint as an art which only he knew how to truly conquer. Indeed, there is no other collection of organ works which is not only so eclectic by design but also leaves one perplexed. Ultimately, a far deeper level of satisfaction will only be achieved if one believes in the wealth of attributes in this unique collection. The evidence of a multi – dimensional calculating genius is there.

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[85]Williams, Peter**,** *The Organ Works of J.S. Bach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) p.137
[86] Williams, Peter**,** *The Organ Works of J.S. Bach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)p.137

CHAPTER 13

Fugue in B Minor BWV 544 (ii) – Thematic transformation and utilisation

The rhetorical power of this fugue is rarely understood. Malcolm Boyd erroneously states (in comparison to the preceding prelude) that, 'the subject of the fugue is, after this, curiously self – effacing in its plain stepwise quavers – so much so, in fact, that several entries are apt to go unnoticed among the continuo-like quaver tread of left hand and pedals.'[87] This statement paints a remarkably bland and unhelpful guidance as to the inner mechanisms and expression of this fugue which in my view is just as poignant from a structural perspective as the Prelude albeit in a very different guise.

Dame Gillian Weir's CD Insert Notes for her recordings in 2003 on the *Gerald Woehl* Millenium Organ at Leipzig whet the appetite far more concerning the true sophistication of this fugue.

> With calm inevitability the fugue unfolds from the grave beauty of the subject, a motif moving entirely by step, in even quavers. The tension mounts as it is joined on its course by two different counter-subjects. The primary subject, moving inexorably through one key after another impels the music forward as though it were a gondola sailing in splendour through the skies until it docks at last before the heaven whose floor is thick inlaid with patinas of bright gold. [88]

The most revealing facet of this fugue purely from a thematic perspective is Bach's ability to state and introduce various differing themes into the composition throughout its trajectory before resurrecting them and combining them in the coda. No other fugue in Bach's organ literature possesses the same compositional hallmarks solely from this perspective.

> The famous complexity of so much of Bach's music becomes remarkably clear and transparent as soon as one discovers the relevant building blocks on which a particular genre of music is erected. Many kinds of Bach works – such as fugues, arias, choruses, concerto movements and so on – involve the crafting of musical ideas which are repeated and varied in relatively disciplined ways throughout an entire movement.[89]

The primary subject is indeed unassuming if one takes it at the speed which most organists play it. Most recordings vary between about 90 /100 crotchets per minute. The question of tempo (with Bach it nearly always relates to a natural pulse) is of course more relevant if the Crotchet = 60 per minute; this allows the fugue to be interpreted in a completely different dimension.

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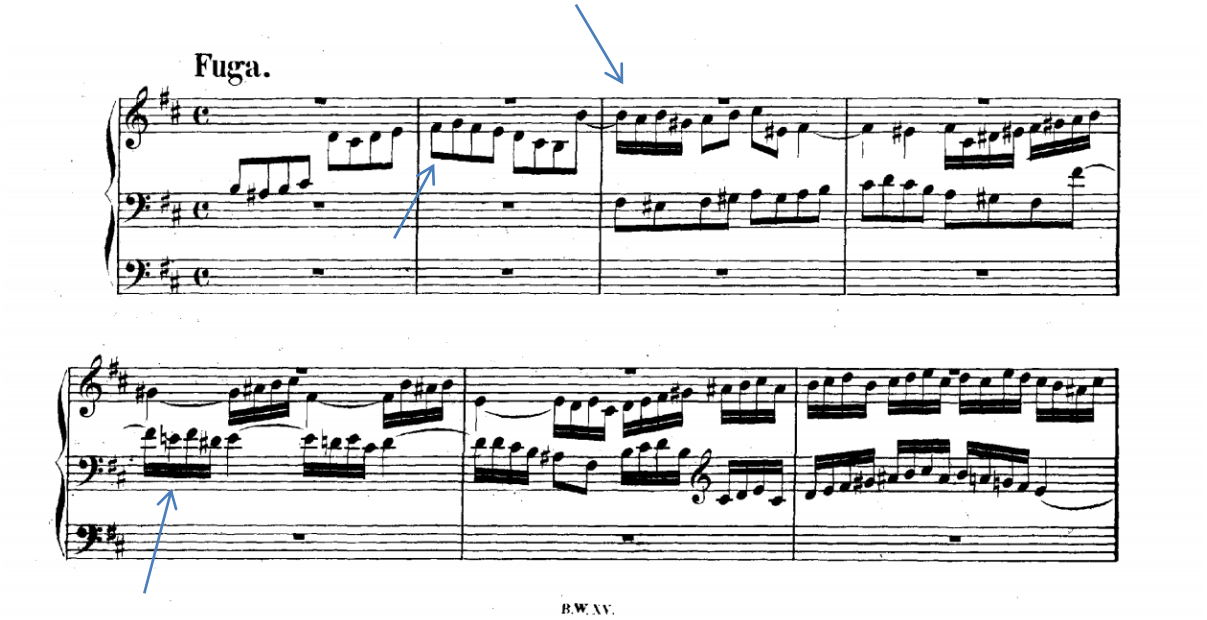
[87] Boyd, Malcolm, *Master Musicians – Bach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) p. 61
[88] Weir, Gillian *Organ Master Series Vol. 4 (CD Notes)* 2003.
[89] Dreyfus, Laurence**,** 'Bachian Invention and its mechanisms' in *The Cambridge Companion to Bach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.171 – 192 at p.173.

Table No.25 - the subject entries throughout BWV 544 (ii).

Measure	Device	Voice
1	S	Alto
3	S - 4	Tenor
3	C/S (i)	Alto
8	S – 8	Bass (Ped.)
8	C/S (i) - 5	Tenor
10	S + 5	Soprano
10	C/S (i) - 15	Bass (Ped.)
13	S	Tenor
15	S + 11	Soprano
18	S - 6	Bass (Ped.)
20	S + 7	Alto
24	S - 11	Bass (Ped.)
28	S - 4	Tenor
30	S	Alto
35	S + 11	Soprano
40	S - 7	Tenor
42	S + 5	Alto
49	S + 10	Soprano
59	S	Tenor
59	C/S (i) + 4	Alto
59	C/S (ii)	Soprano
61	S + 5	Alto
61	C/S (i) – 8	Tenor
61	C/S (ii) - 18	Bass (Ped.)
68	S + 9	Soprano
68	C/S (ii) - 14	Tenor
71	S + 9	Soprano
71	S - 5	Tenor
79	S - 11	Bass (Ped.)
79	C/S (ii) - 4	Alto
81	S - 8	Bass (Ped.)

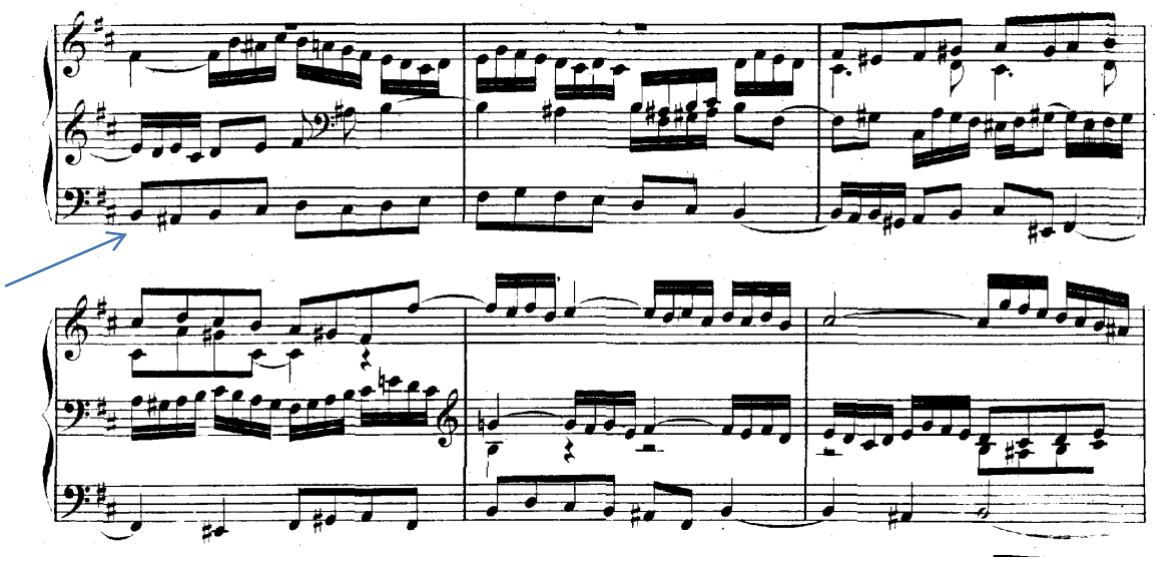
83	C/S (i) + 7	Soprano
83	S - 5	Bass (Ped.)
83	C/S (ii) - 12	Tenor
85	S + 8	Soprano
85	C/S (i) - 6	Tenor
85	C/S (ii) - 15	Bass (Ped.)
87	C/S (i) - 12	Bass (Ped.)

Illustration No.180 – BWV 544 (ii) – bb.1 – 7.



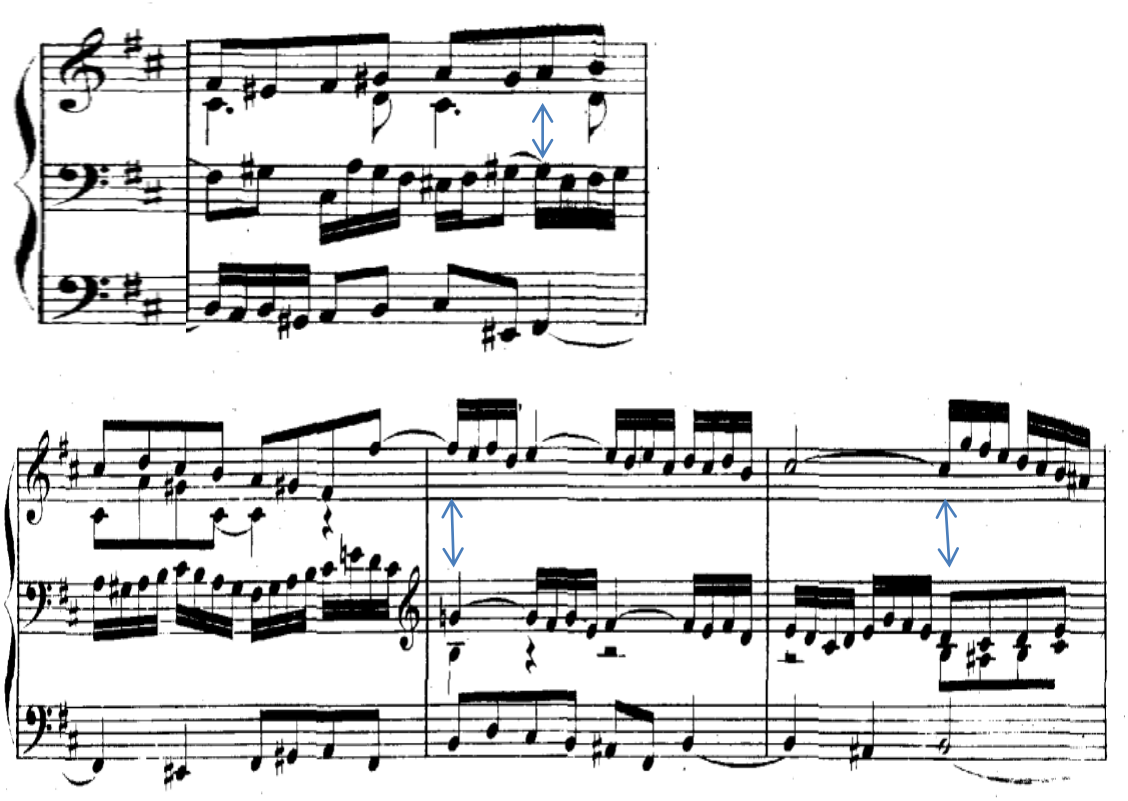
The subject undoubtedly has a narrow melodic compass yet its simplicity actually leads to complexity concerning its ability to be combined with subsequent countersubjects. One can see the sequential design and also the use of melodic inversion (b.2) within the subject. The first counter-subject which begins in b.3 is regular throughout the exposition. The extended bridge passage between the second and third entries is carefully crafted with a distinct element of the countersubject contained therein. Whilst of course there is the descending sequence of implied 9/8 suspensions, it is from b.5 that a further countersubject is latterly derived; this will be illustrated latterly. Whereas the pedal is normally the last voice to enter, in this case, it is the third voice to enter.

Illustration No. 181 – BWV 544 (ii) – bb. 8 – 13.



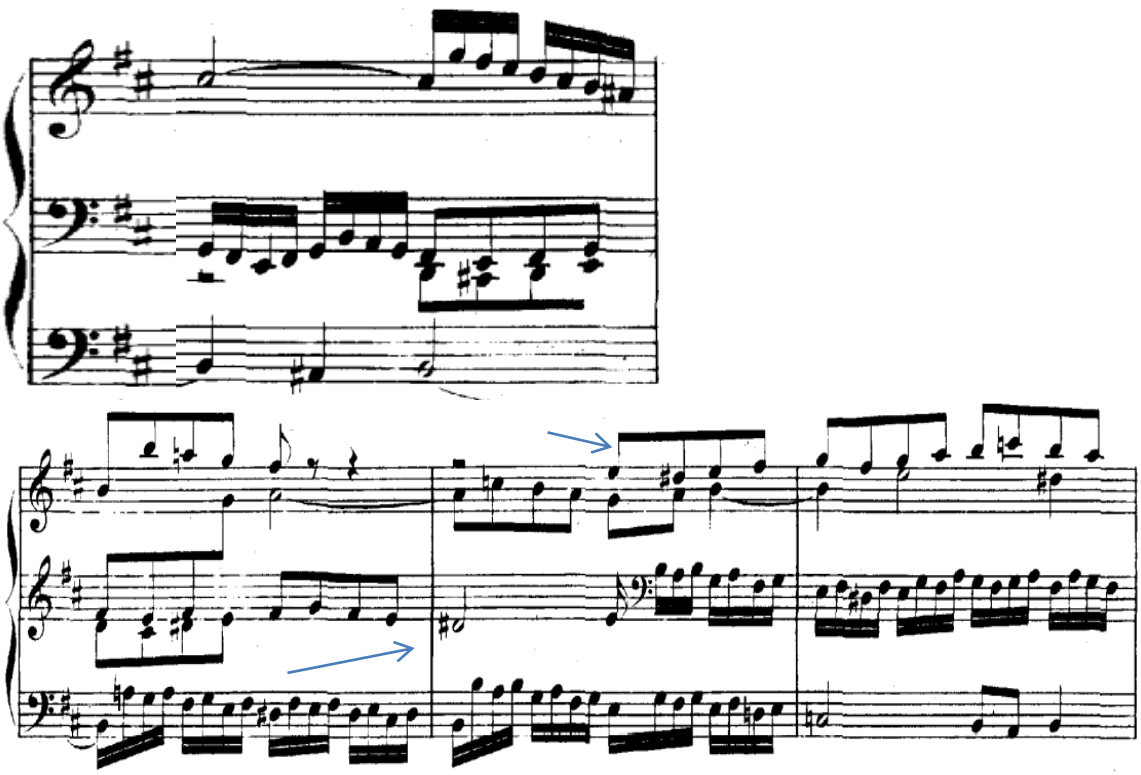
One aspect which is apparent throughout this fugue and which becomes increasingly more – so, is that of heightened dissonance. Such intricate contrapuntal lines that weave parallel to one another frequently create moments of unsurpassable beauty but at the same time, there is an element of obscurity to the harmonic language and dissonance that Bach in his later years entrusted in his works. The brief passage at bb.10–13 with the fourth and final entry of the exposition exhibits a multitude of examples, three examples of dissonance are highlighted. Of course, dissonance is not uncommon with Bach but the complexity and indeed frequency often yields a harmonic language which was not surpassed or indeed imitated by Bach's contemporaries and thus represents the apogee of the North German contrapuntal style and temperament.

Illustration No.182 – BWV 544 (ii) – bb.10 – 13.



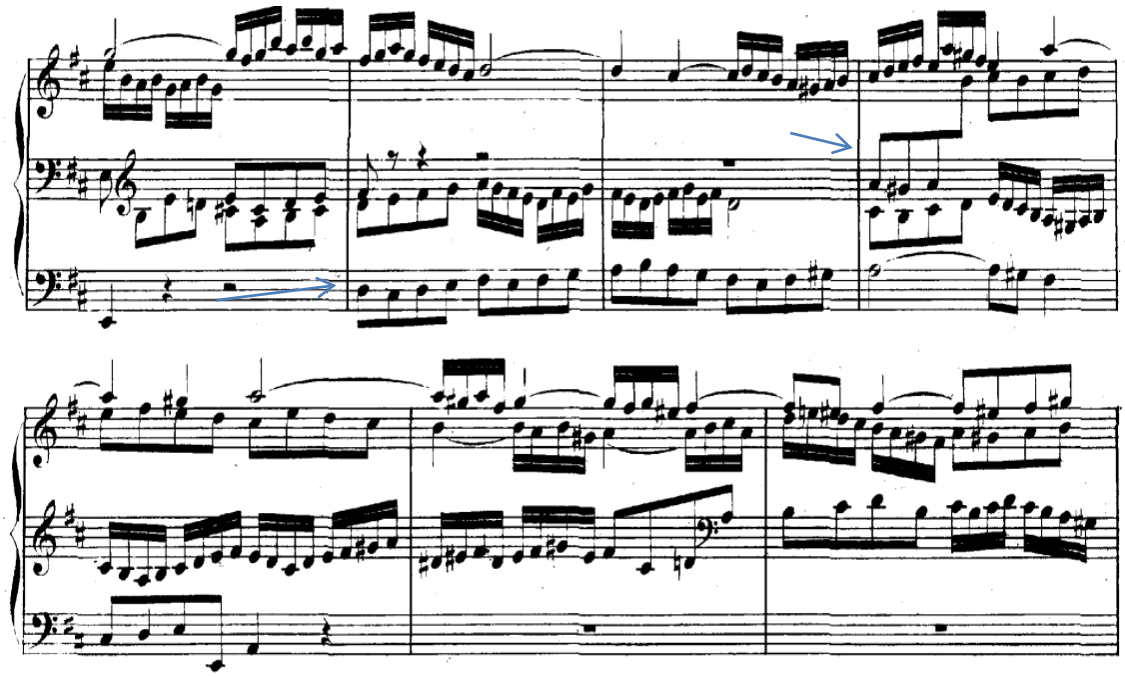
What follows from b.13 is a succinct volley of subject entries, each being stated in a different key. As Table No.25 illustrates, the entries effortlessly overlap throughout the differing voices. This succession in different keys is an unusual feature to find during the initial stages of any fugue. However, the purpose is to create a sense of heightened harmonic rhythm which is ultimately driving towards an overall modulation to the dominant. This aspect of continuous harmonic evolution and projection is carefully managed by Bach through subtle manipulations of the subject. The instance of altering the D to the D-Sharp in b.14 /15 propels the direction towards the tonality of E Minor (see overleaf).

Illustration No. 183 – BWV 544 (ii) – bb. 13 – 16.



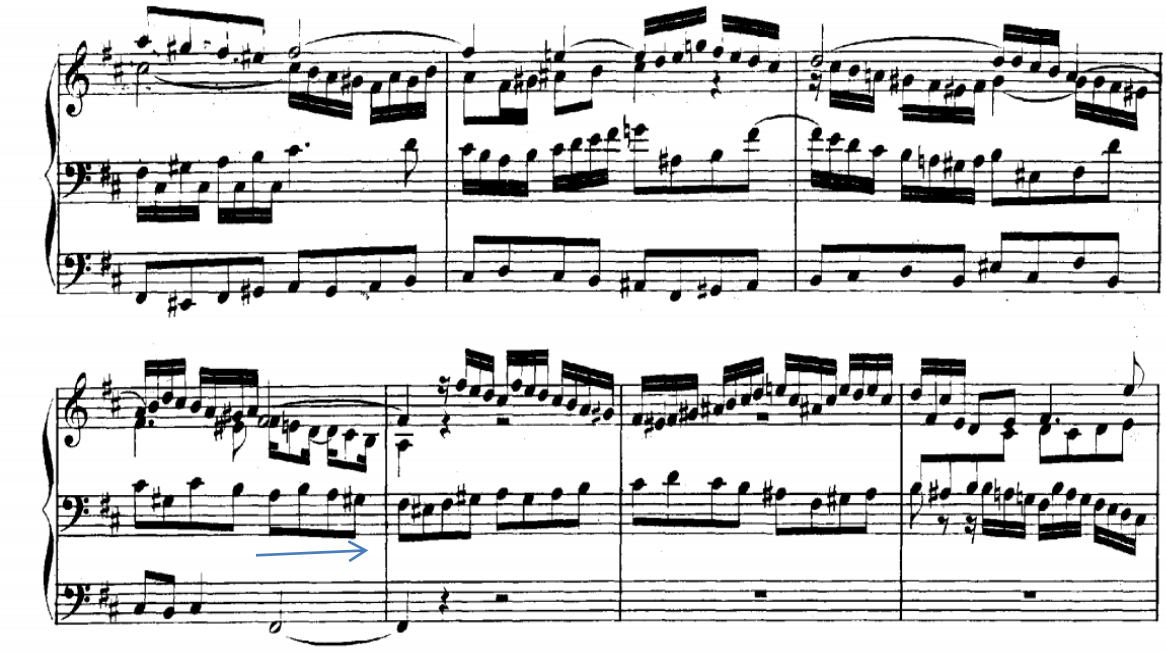
The subsequent entries are in undeniably related keys (see Table No.25 – bb.15–28) – the dominant, subdominant and relative major. However, Bach is still able to generate a sense of rapid tonal fluctuation and instability throughout the fugal structure, a process achieved by means of avoiding the platitude of the cadence and by a reluctance to define any definite tonal area. In this sense, the tonal fluidity of Bach's writing here looks forward in a distinctly modern way to the concept of 'prolongation' in its persistent avoidance of cadence.

Illustration No.184 – BWV 544 (ii) – bb. 17 – 23.



This sense of fluidity in the first stage of Bach's fugal structure is lent greater significance in that its ultimate goal is towards a cadence and modulation in the key of the dominant minor – F Sharp minor. A unequivocal perfect cadence into F sharp minor takes place at b.28 and it is here that an entirely new passage based on a very different compositional rationale begins.

Illustration No.185 – BWV 544 (ii) – bb. 24 – 30.

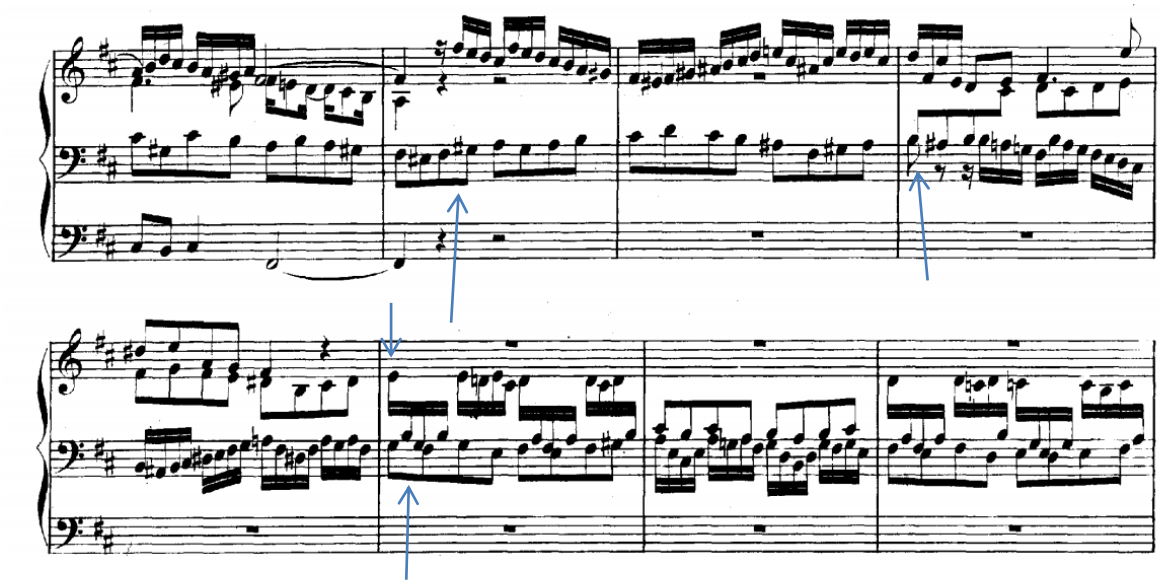


Finn Egeland has suggested that fugue as a form displays little textural variety; BWV 544(ii) would prove dramatically to the contrary.

> The constituent characteristic of a fugue is that it is conceived for a number of voices (typically 2 – 6, rarely more), and the primary sonic contrast is established by the varying number of active voices and their position in the total gamut of the composition. Nor does the fugue display any great variation in texture, since a fugue is always conceived as a continuous polyphonic web from beginning to end.[90]

In Bach's structure, this is categorically untrue. Of the fugues encountered thus far, BWV 544 (ii) undoubtedly represents the idea of a continuous polyphonic web as the contrapuntal command is particularly intricate and the design of one subject statement leading into the next is effortless. That said, BWV 544 (ii) exhibits arguably the most radical variation in texture in which the sense of monothematic continuity is disrupted. Not only does the texture change from b.28, but the very nature of the fugue changes temperamentally from a mood of a subdued stoicism to one that is far more tender in its pensive contrapuntal display (symptomatic, perhaps, of Bach's assimilation of the *galant* style?). Indeed, it is though Bach is at his most expressive here. The substantial observation is that of the textural reduction to the manuals only and this in itself is seldom more than three voices at once. When playing this development section, one often reverts to a much smaller registration often played on the *Positiv.* Furthermore, one needs only 8' and 4' flutes to convey the 'come hither' charm and elegance. There is no doubt that Bach intends to draw the ear far closer to the subtle nuances of this substantial developmental passage.

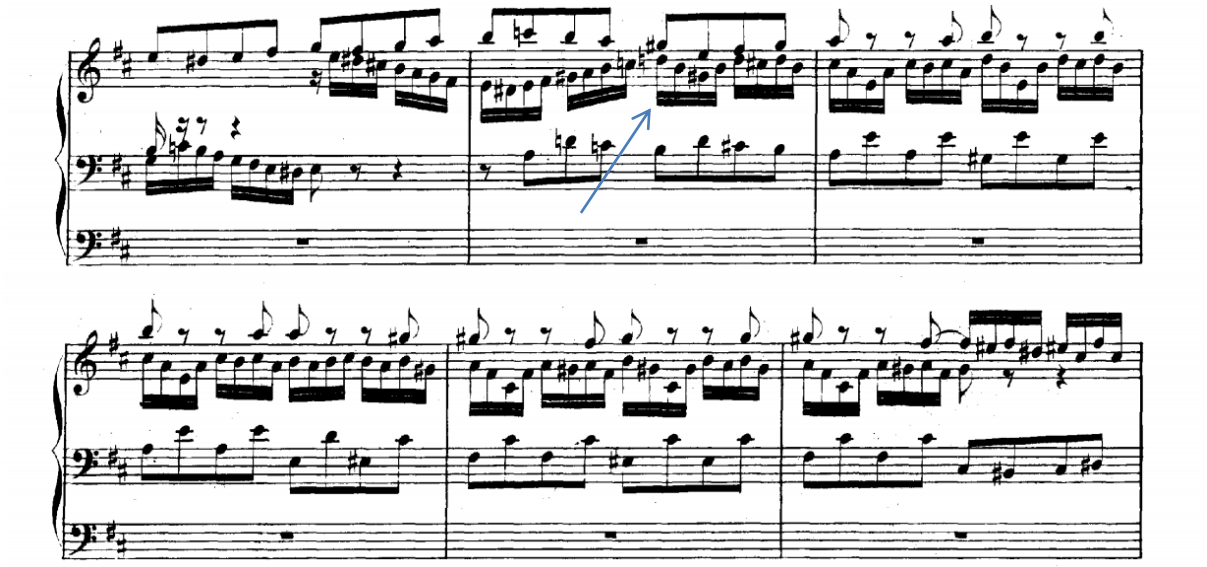
Illustration No.186 – BWV 544 (ii) – bb. 27 – 34.



[90]Hansen, Finn. Egeland**,** *Layers of Musical Meaning* (Copenhagen: The Royal Library Museum Tusculanum Press, 2006) p. 305

The primary subject is subtly woven into the texture from b.28 in the tenor and it is only at b.32 that there is a brief sense of thematic freedom. This invertible and indeed sequential passage provides two themes (b.32) (i and ii) which are to be of substantial impact in a latter section just before the coda (see Illustration No.186). Theme (ii) (upper voice at b.32) is exploited sequentially almost immediately throughout this developmental passage. The section of bb.36 –39 provides a succinct example.

Illustration No.187 – BWV 544 (ii) – bb. 35 – 40.



What is unusual for a developmental passage or episodic passage is the fact that the subject is still present for a lot of the time and there is no attempt by Bach to break into a passage of free counterpoint, void of previously encountered themes in the initial stages of the development or indeed the exposition. An extract from the 1754 obituary (compiled by C.P.E. Bach and W.F. Bach) reads

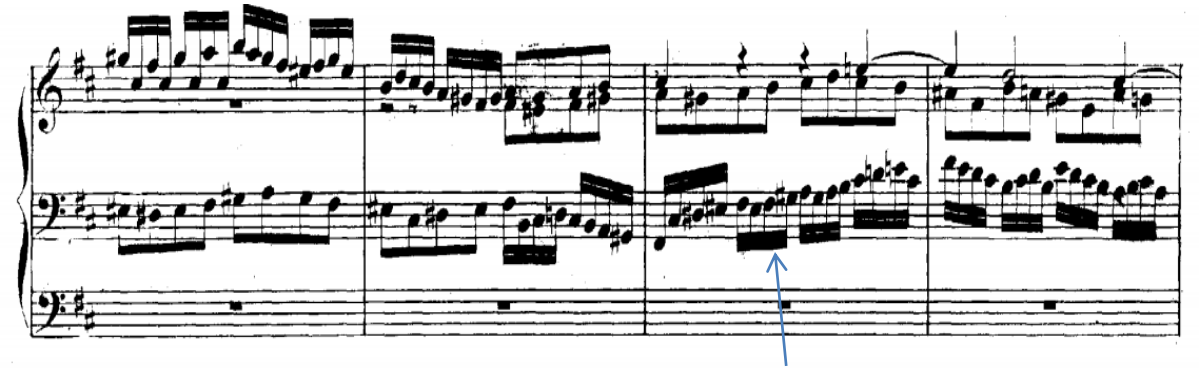
> If ever a composer showed polyphony in its greatest strength, it was certainly our late lamented Bach. If ever a musician employed the most hidden secrets of harmony with the most skilled artistry, it was certainly our Bach. No one ever showed so many ingenious and unusual ideas as he in elaborate pieces such as ordinarily seemed dry exercises in craftsmanship. He needed only to have heard any theme to be aware – it seemed in the same instant – of almost every intricacy that artistry could produce in the treatment of it.[91]

It is only after b.43 that a gradual dissolution begins to take hold as a statement of the subject is not uttered in its entirety for five bars. However, instead there is an intricate two part duet in the soprano and alto over a running bass line based on the cycle of 5ths. Whilst the subject itself is not stated, the running bass line at b.43 is initially cast from the subject as upon closer inspection, the

[91] Wolff, Christoff**,** *Bach – Essays on His Life and Music*, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991) p.393

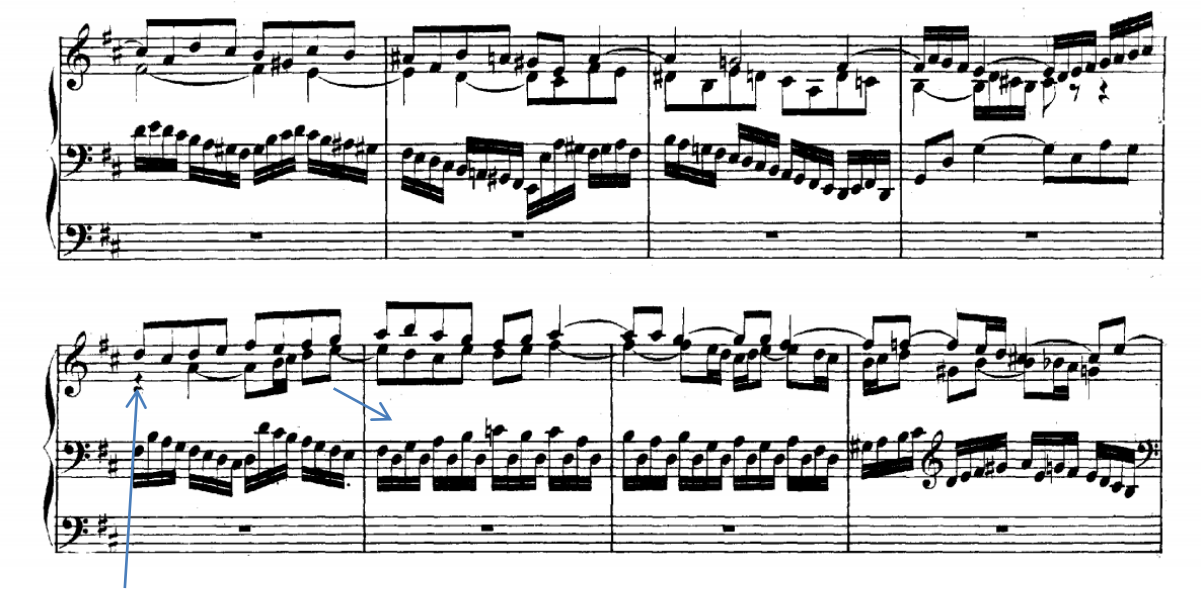
origin of this line is merely a rhythmic diminution of the subject stated in the key of the dominant minor.

Illustration No.188 – BWV 544 (ii) – bb. 41 – 44.



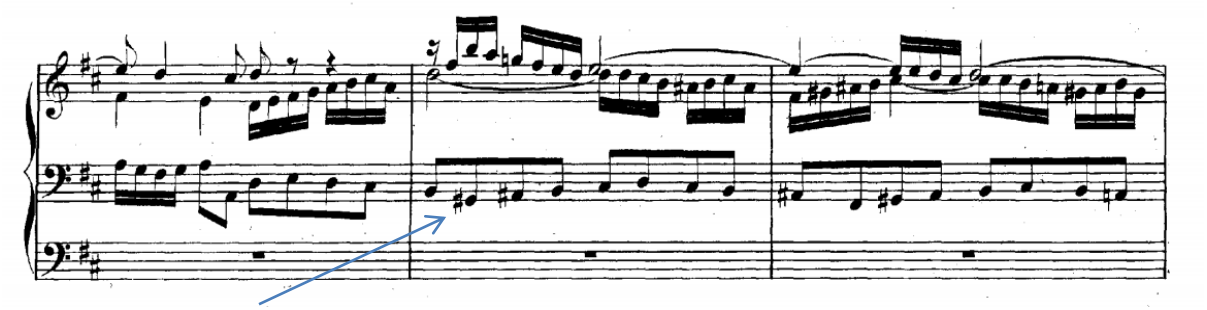
It is at b.49 where for the second and indeed last time that there is a subject entry in D Major. The significance of this is that it is effectively the *structural and tonal* watershed and it is from here that the fugue is then gradually veered back towards the key of B Minor.

Illustration No.189 – BWV 544 (ii) – bb. 45 – 52.



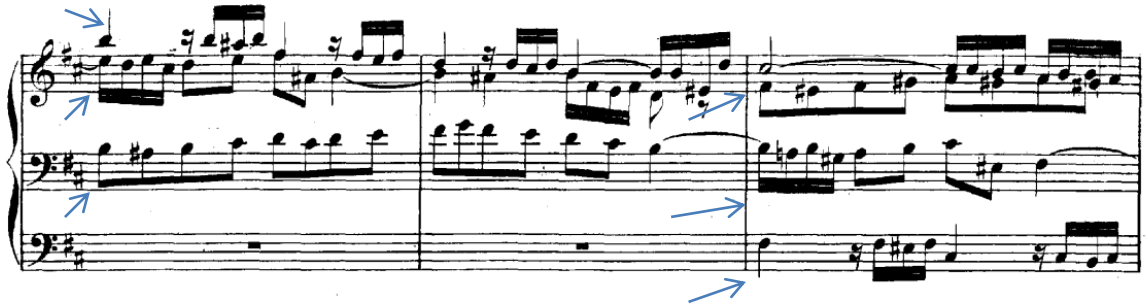
The accompanying bass line in bb.50-51 undoubtedly looks ahead to the *galant* style and is perhaps more typical of C.P.E. Bach. The most *pivotal* bar throughout the lengthy development section is arguably b.54. It is though a weather vane swings to the opposite direction as the tonal direction is now switched back towards B Minor. There is an affirmative perfect cadence onto the key of D Major at b.53. However, it is at b.54 and solely the bass line which reinforces the change in tonal direction. One can also witness the melodic identity of the bass line in comparison to the main subject.

Illustration No.190 – BWV 544 (ii) – bb. 53 – 55.



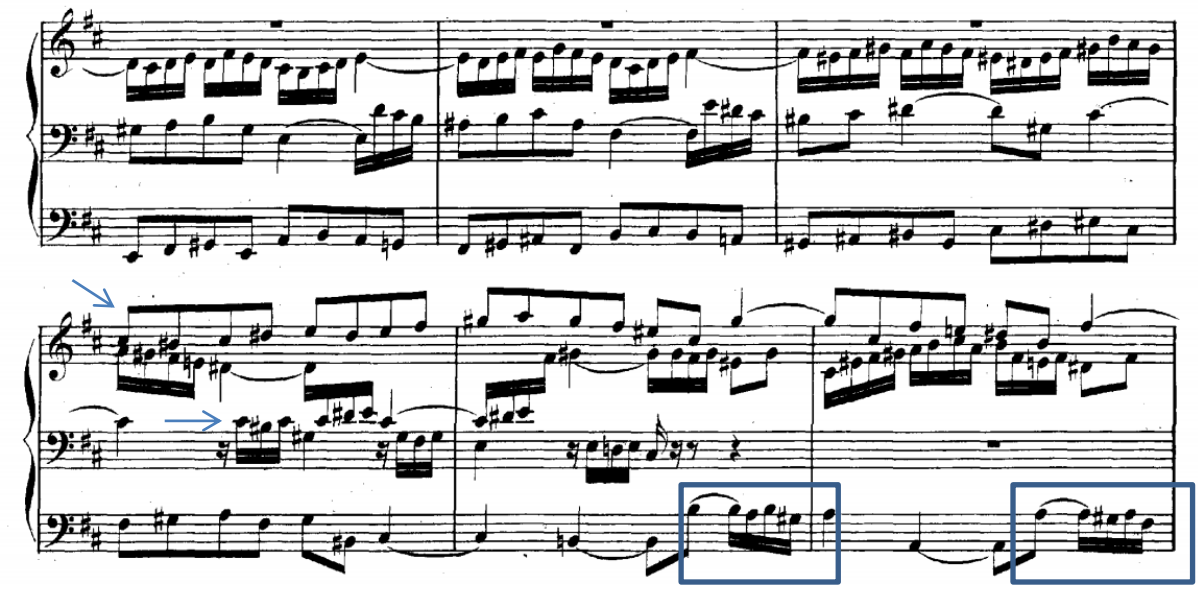
The recapitulation at b.59 cannot be mistaken. Not only is there a return of the first countersubject but also, Bach introduces a second countersubject at this stage. This second countersubject which is merely a 'motto' idea becomes increasingly prevalent within the texture. Of course, this second countersubject originates from b.5 or indeed can be traced to the semiquavers of the first countersubject. However, none of these countersubjects is used with strict invertibility after their united *second* appearance at b.61 until the penultimate entry. In delaying this invertibility, Bach no doubt sought to create some form of additional suspense in this final stage of the fugue's larger structure.

Illustration No.191 – BWV 544 (ii) – bb. 59 – 61.



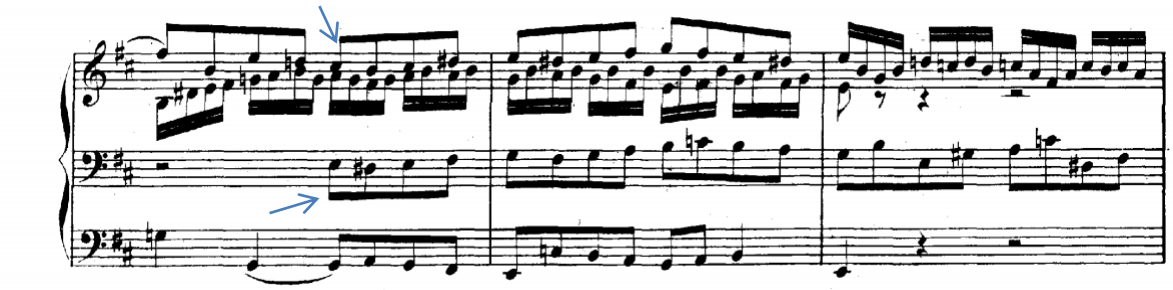
Throughout bb.64 – 66, there is a deliberate gathering of dramatic energy that anticipates the next three subject entries. Ultimately, the intention is deliberate as Bach is preparing the statement of the subject in the key of C Sharp Minor – the secondary dominant. This occurs at b.68. In addition, this is arguably the climactic entry as not only has there been a substantial amount of anticipation through the rising sequence but also, the subject entries which follow thereafter are within a closer tonal compass to that of the tonic. It is also curious to note that Bach does hint at the first counter – subject: the pedal line in b.69 and b.70 makes reference to the opening melodic contour on the fourth beat of both bars. This is without doubt another unification of thematic ideas.

Illustration No.192 – BWV 544 (ii) – bb. 65 – 70.



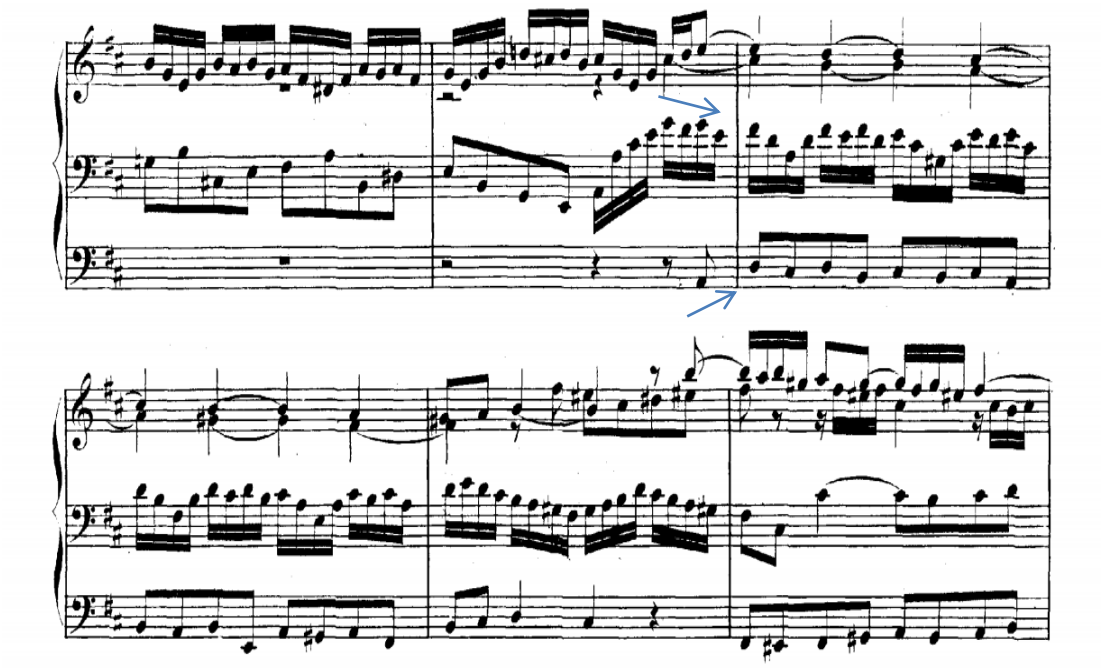
This gradual confinement of keys and gradual winding down of harmonic tension is represented in b.71 whereby there is effectively a double entry as the subjects move in parallel 6ths.

Illustration No.193 – BWV 544 (ii) – bb. 71 – 73.



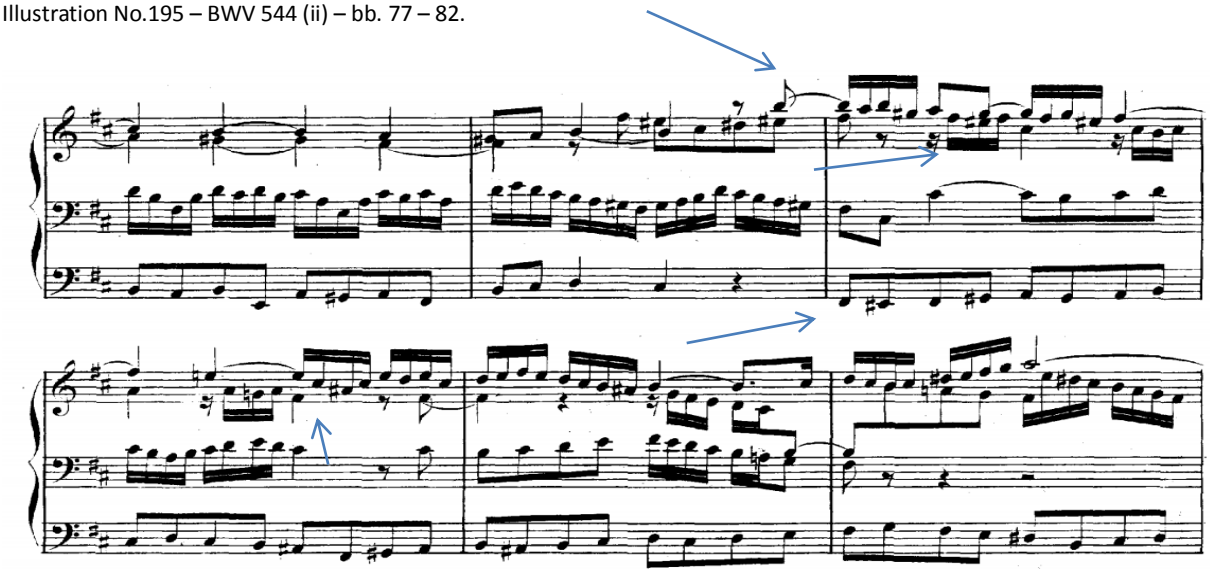
From bb.73-78, both themes (i) and (ii), first appearing at the beginning of the development, are utilised as the fundamental ideas throughout these bars for the episode. Bach's ability to see the potential of two simple but nonetheless effective ideas as thought processes could not be better witnessed in this passage. One of course could suggest that such repetition would be tactless. However, the results are to the contrary and the harmonic richness and sonorities which this creates are not surpassed in this fugue. This passage on the one hand unwinds the harmonic tension: on the other, it anticipates the long awaited return of the subject in the tonic or in its answer form.

Illustration No.194 – BWV 544 (ii) – bb. 74 – 79.



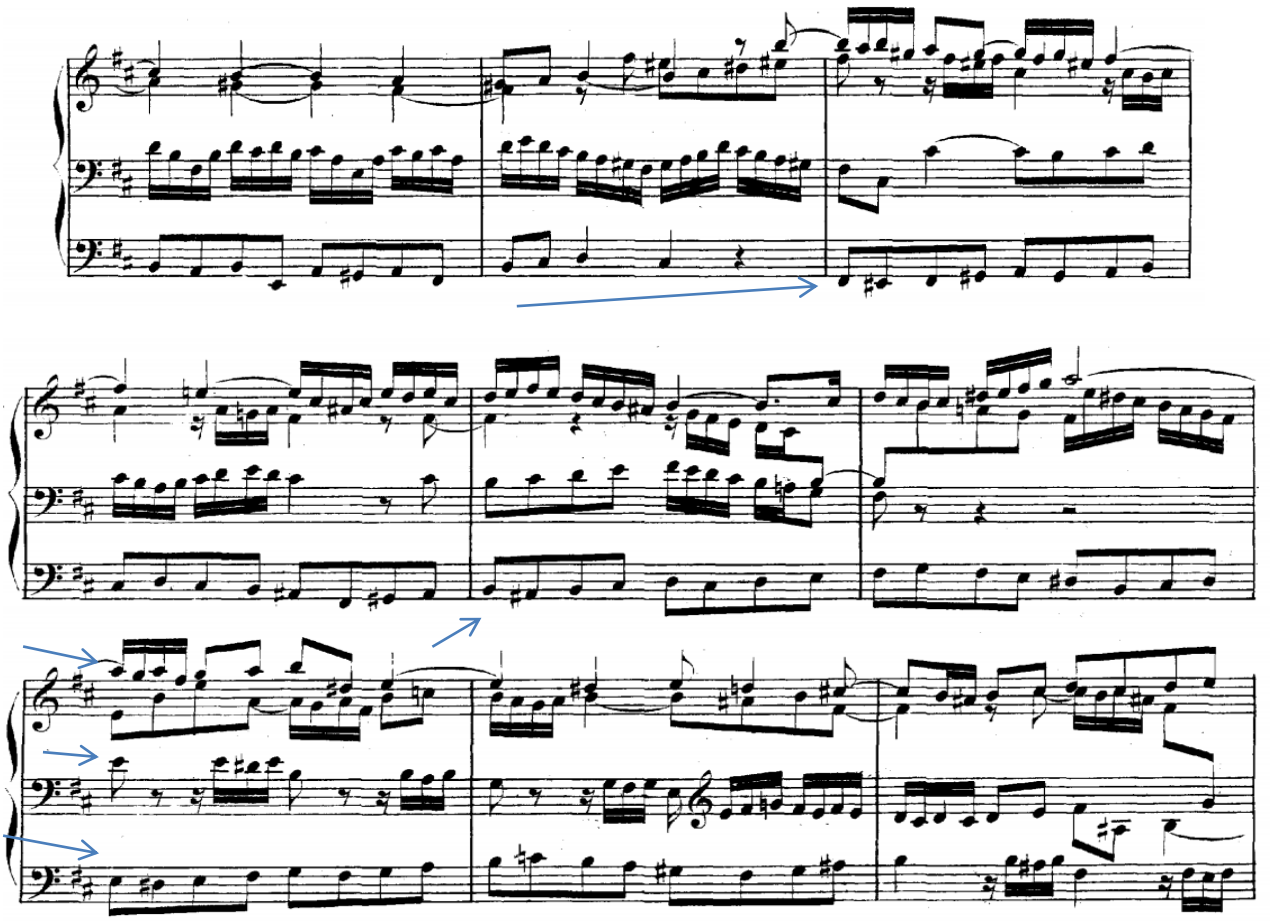
As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the most striking element of this fugue is that of thematic utilisation and indeed integration. The coda is the most revealing of this thought process and proves Bach's canny manipulation of thematic structure. One needs to look no further than bb.79-80 to see the subject, the two countersubjects and thematic idea (ii) from the development. All four ideas are *briefly* presented in these two bars alone. Whilst admittedly the full statement of the first countersubject is not complete, the opening melodic contour is nonetheless without doubt. One could also argue that the first countersubject here in this context shows greater correlation to the bridge passage idea from b.5., though the second countersubject is distinctly independent.

Illustration No.195 – BWV 544 (ii) – bb. 77 – 82.



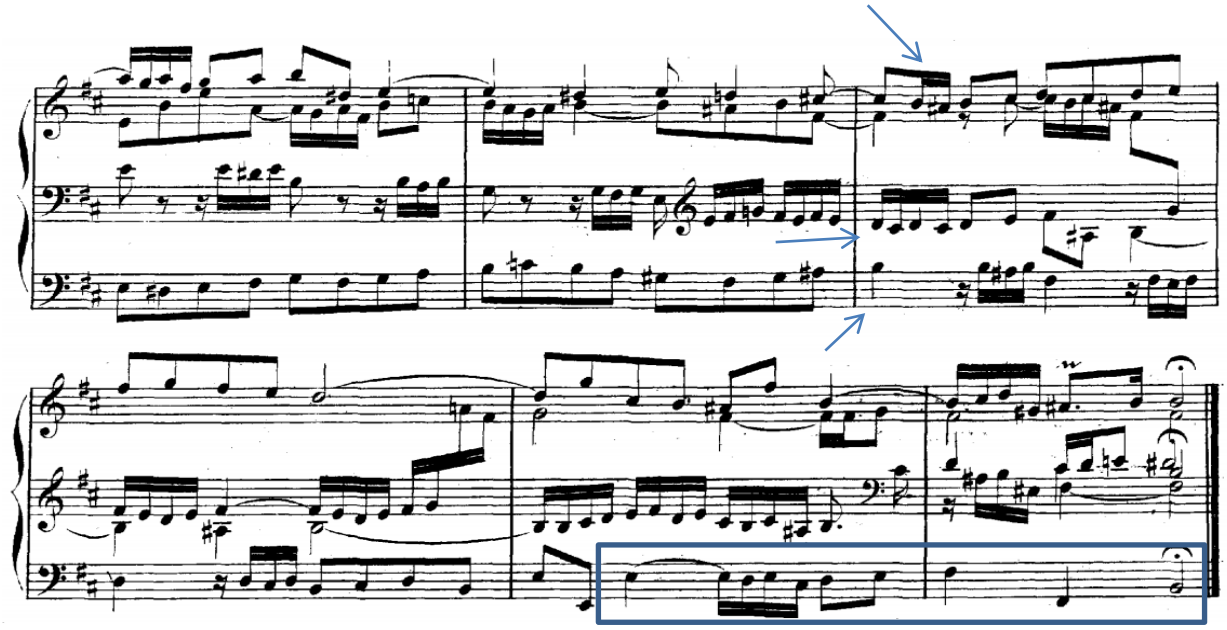
Throughout the first six bars of the coda from b.79, the pedal purely by itself has three *successive* subject entries all in different keys too. A remarkably unusual feature and seldom used by Bach in the organ fugues though a trait to be found in the subsequent analysis of BWV 547 (ii).

Illustration No.196 – BWV 544 (ii) – bb. 77 – 85.



The subject allied with the two countersubjects is clearly depicted in b.83 in E Minor and again in the tonic at b.85. It is interesting to observe that the outline from the first countersubject stated in the pedal at b.87 is the last recognisable melodic idea and not the subject itself. And thus, this fugue is brought to its final conclusion after a definitive perfect cadence at b.88.

Illustration No.197 – BWV 544 (ii) – bb. 83 – end.



Art is the goal of an escape from the world, as is faith. E.T.A. Hoffmann said, “By its intrinsic, unique character, music is therefore religious in nature, and its origins can be sought and found nowhere but in religion, in the church.” Furthermore, “Music unlocks for man an unknown realm, a world which has nothing in common with the world of the senses that surrounds him, and in which he leaves behind all feelings that can be defined bywords, so that he may give himself up to what is inexpressible.” The inexpressible, the religious, is in fact the act of submission to art. This dichotomy of the world is typical for the spiritual posture of the entire Romantic movement. Art has its origin in a realm of imagination, a realm of dreams, which lies beyond all everyday experience.[92]

The nature of the BWV 544 (ii) is that it embodies spirituality, even a metaphysical aspiration, which looks forward to the aesthetic sentiments of the nineteenth century in its desire for expression and imagination.

[92]Herz, Gerhard, *‘Essays on J.S. Bach’* (Michigan, U.M.I Research Press, 1985) p. 69

CHAPTER 14

Fugue in C Major BWV 547 (ii) – The apogee of Contrapuntal Art

BWV 547 (ii) represents what is ultimately a distilled thought process – one that takes an uncomplicated melodic idea and yields a complex construction from a concisely crafted kernel. As such, this fugue exhibits the apotheosis of contrapuntal construction and can rightly be regarded as the most densely constructed fugue within the organ works. In addition, although a date cannot be precisely given, it is often considered to be Bach's last organ work (coupled with the Prelude) and is likely to have been composed in the early 1740s. This quest for contrapuntal perfection whereby Bach sought to compose for the sake of solely composing was a trait that defines Bach's final decade which saw him oversee the publication of several works, but particularly those redefining contrapuntal and harmonic boundaries are: The Goldberg Variations (BWV 988), The Musical Offering (BWV 1079), Canonic Variations on *Von Himmel Hoch da komm ich her* (BWV 769) and The Art of Fugue (BWV 1080). As such, BWV 547 (ii) can be seen as a fugue which is designed to display contrapuntal craftsmanship at its most sublime. The subject is remarkably short and is thus replete with possibilities and Bach was undoubtedly aware of the fact that the harmonic and contrapuntal possibilities were plentiful.

Illustration No.198 – BWV 547 (ii) – bb.1 – 3.

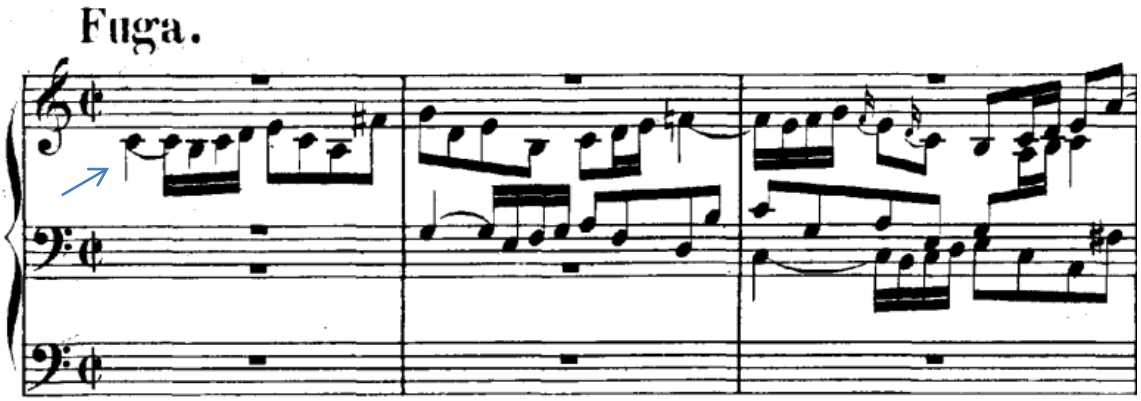


Table No.26 - the subject entries throughout BWV 547 (ii).

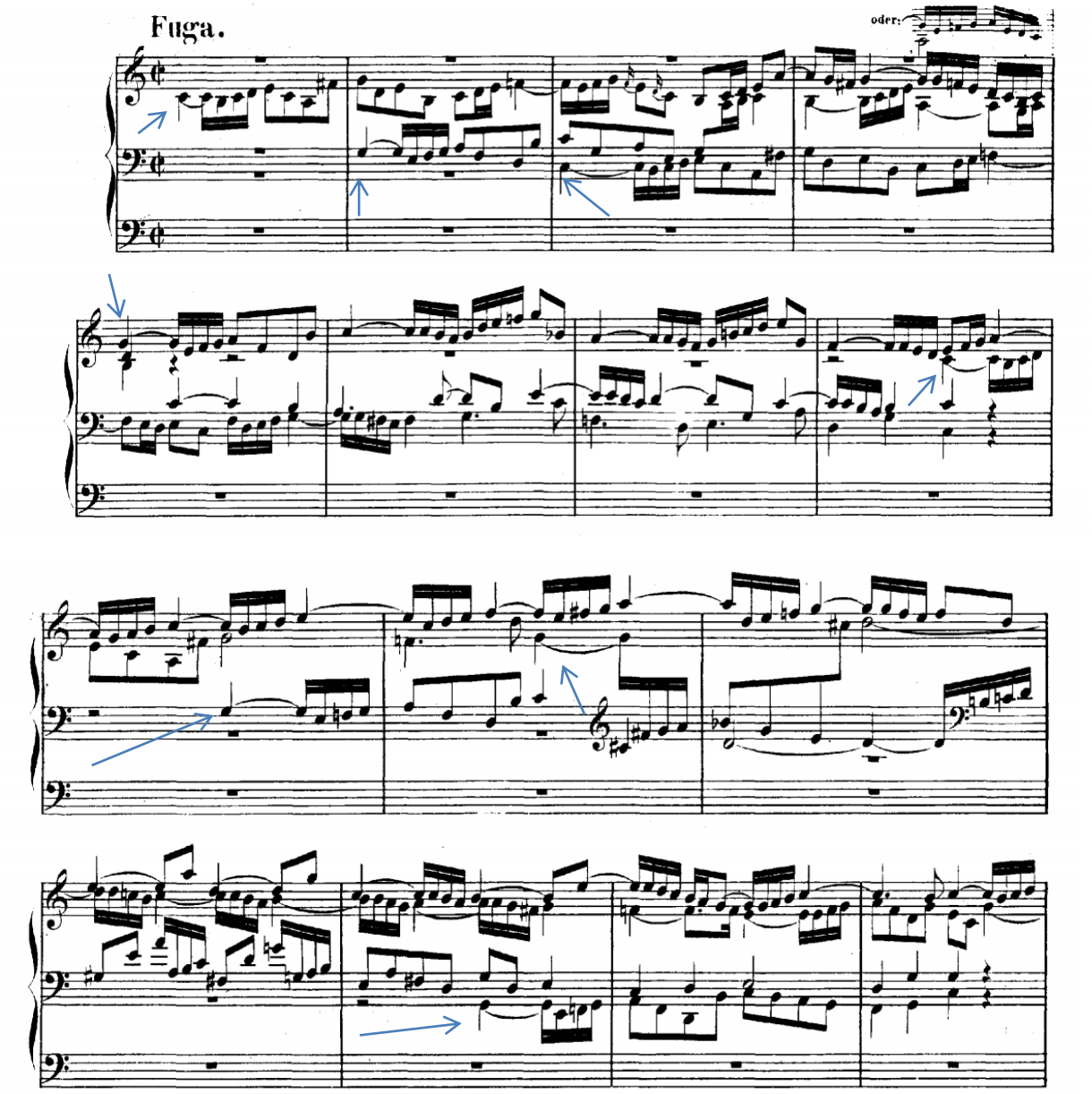
(Given the complexity of this fugue and all the permutations of the subject, all the forms *are* traced back to 'S' e.g. S – 8 augmented and inverted occurs at an octave below the *original subject*, not the previous augmented and inverted entry.)

Measure	Device	Voice
1	S	Alto
2	S – 4 (Answer)	Tenor
3	S - 8	Bass
5	S + 5	Soprano
8	S	Alto
9	S - 4	Tenor
10	S + 5 (Minor alteration)	Alto
13	S - 11	Bass
14	S + 3	Alto
15	S + 8	Soprano
18	S - 4	Tenor
19	S - 8	Bass
20	S + 7	Soprano
21	S + 10	Soprano
25	S - 5	Tenor
27	S + 12 (Inverted)	Soprano
28	S + 8 (Inverted)	Alto
29	S + 2 (Inverted)	Tenor
30	S – 4 (Inverted)	Bass
31 - 33	*Episode – False entries*	(Various)
34	S + 3 (Inverted)	Alto
35	S + 10	Soprano
36	S + 6	Alto
36	S - 3 (Inverted)	Bass
37	S - 7	Bass
38	S + 9 (Inverted)	Soprano
39	S + 13 (Inverted)	Soprano
40	S + 9 (Inverted)	Alto
42	S + 5	Tenor

43	S + 8	Soprano
44	S + 5	Alto
45	S	Tenor
48	S - 4	Bass
49	S – 8 (Augmented)	Bass (Ped.)
49	S + 6 (Inverted)	Soprano
50	S + 3 (Inverted)	Alto
50	S + 9 (Inverted)	Soprano
51	S – 4 (Augmented)	Bass (Ped.)
56	S – 5	Bass
57	S - 2	Tenor
59	S – 4 (Augmented and Inverted)	Bass (Ped.)
62	S – 8 (Augmented and Inverted)	Bass (Ped.)
66	S (Inverted)	Bass
67	S + 8 (Inverted)	Alto
67	S + 12	Soprano
68	S	Tenor
71	S – 4 (Altered)	Bass

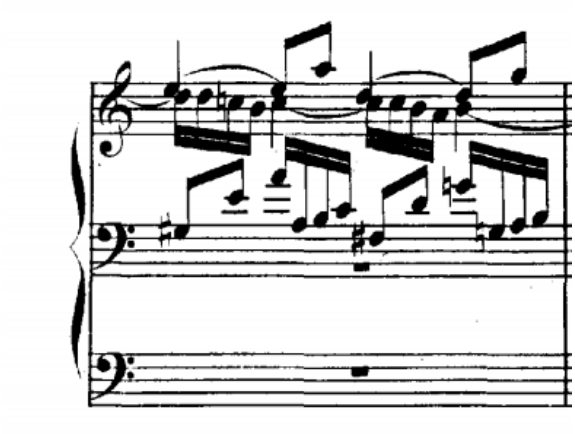
Consequently, as the table suggests given the sheer abundance of subject entries, this fugue can be regarded *predominantly* as a *stretto* fugue as there are so many instances whereby Bach overlaps the subject entries with considerable ease. In fact, it is quite clear from the spirit of the entries and the nature of the fugal subject (cf. the C major fugue of Book I of the '48' BWV 846 (ii)) that the impression of *stretto* is intended. It is also perhaps significant that this fugue, written slightly later than BVW 544 (ii), should possess this 'archaic' property in much the same way as BWV 544 (ii) also exhibited *stretto*-like characteristics in its fugal paragraphs and identity. Given the relative concision of the subject, there is a double exposition but what is curious to note is that the pedal is used only between bb.49-72 as a *climactic device*. The majority of this fugue is therefore confined to the manuals only and as such, the polyphonic accessibility of this fugue to a keyboard player at times is often questionable given the polyphonic density. It was unlikely that Bach really considered the practicality of ease – the quest was for contrapuntal perfection. The diagram overleaf highlights the entries in the exposition followed by those in the second exposition albeit with passing tonal inflections.

Illustration No.199 – BWV 547 (ii) – bb. 1 – 15.



At b.11, Bach hints at the nuances of this fugue by manipulating the answer form so as to already begin the process of harmonic instability. The passing modulation through the implied harmonies of G Minor and D Minor allows for another brief bridge passage before a true answer form from the bass at b.13. In the majority of the bridge passages and episodic passages, not only do these brief passages exhibit melodic traits from the subject but also, they are constructed from the perspective of interlocking patterns. The first substantial example of this is at b.12.

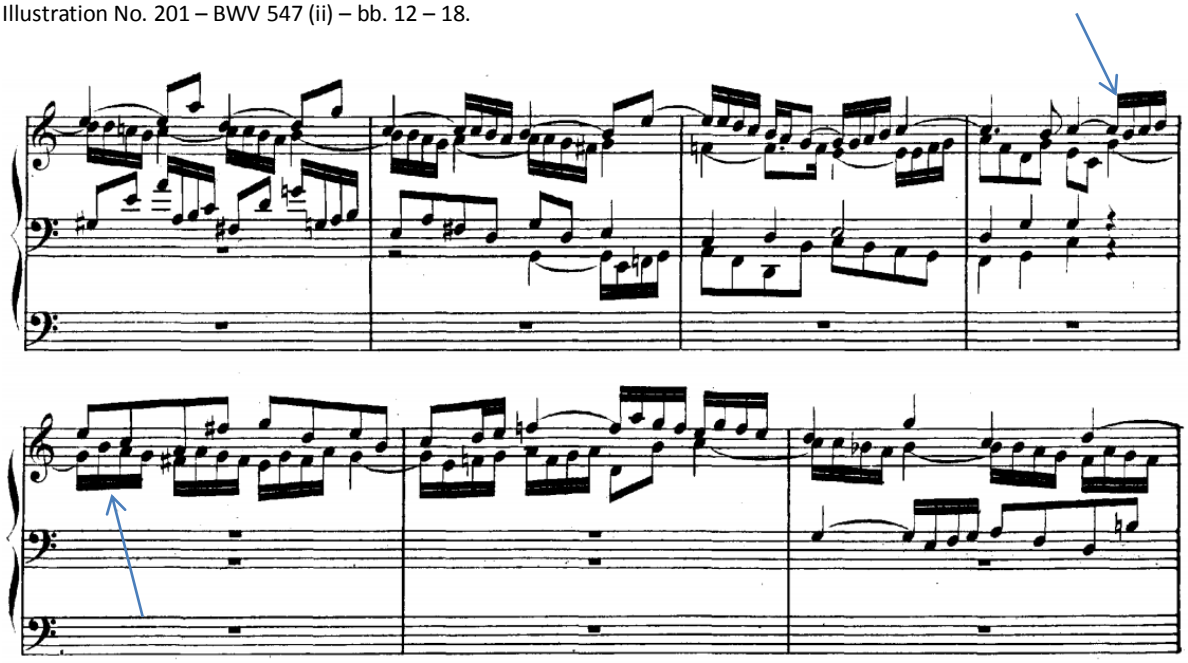
Illustration No.200 – BWV 547 (ii) – b.12.



Whilst of course it is harmonically sequential, just this one bar alone reveals how carefully Bach thought with regards to contrapuntal lines.

There is a definitive cadence on to the tonic at b.15 and this marks the end of the double exposition. However, it also marks the beginning of a substantial journey towards more remote tonal areas and any suggestion now of a tonal region in C Major is very much out of the question. This section beginning at b.16 is announced by an initial two part dialogue.

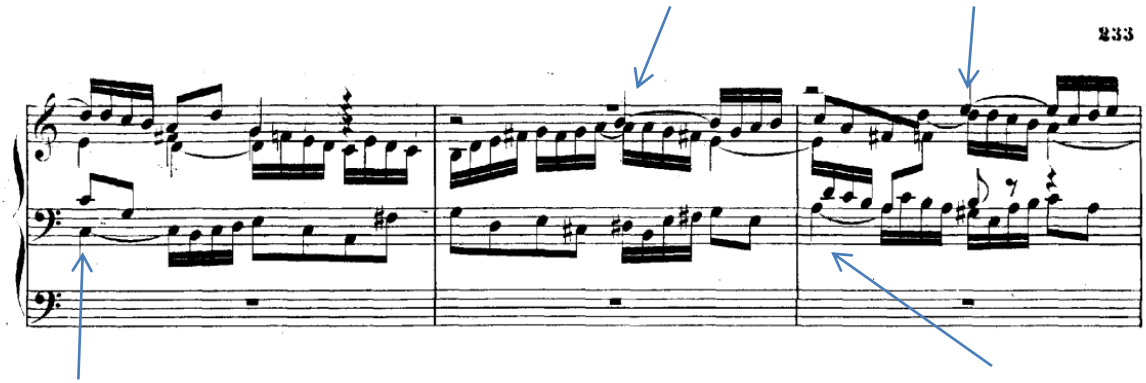
Illustration No. 201 – BWV 547 (ii) – bb. 12 – 18.



It is abundantly clear that so much of the surrounding counterpoint is inspired from the subject. Moreover, if one examines the initial semiquavers of the accompanying contrapuntal line at b.16, there is the hint of the inversion. From bb.20 – 21, it is here that Bach begins to deviate and the

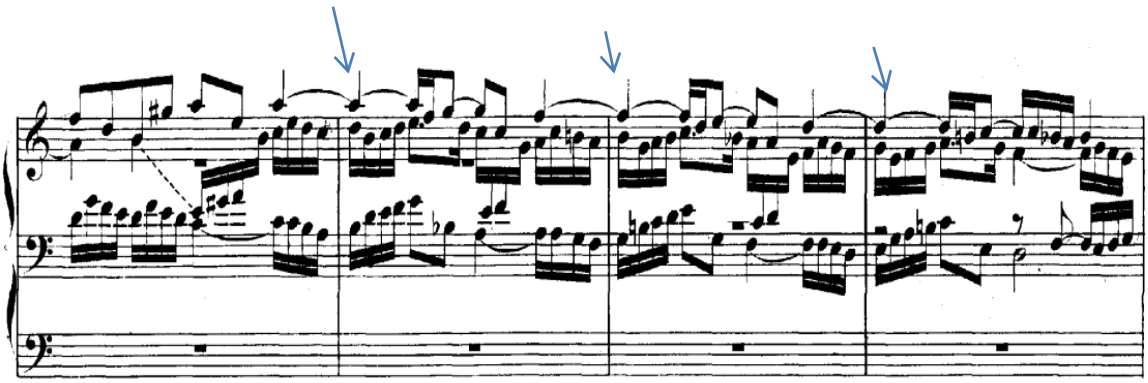
keys of A Minor and E Minor are passed through. The subtlety by which the entries are overlapped is no doubt what Bach had intended – effortless complexity. Again, the inversion of the subject is hinted at in the bass line at b.21.

Illustration No.202 – BWV 547 (ii) – bb. 19 – 21.



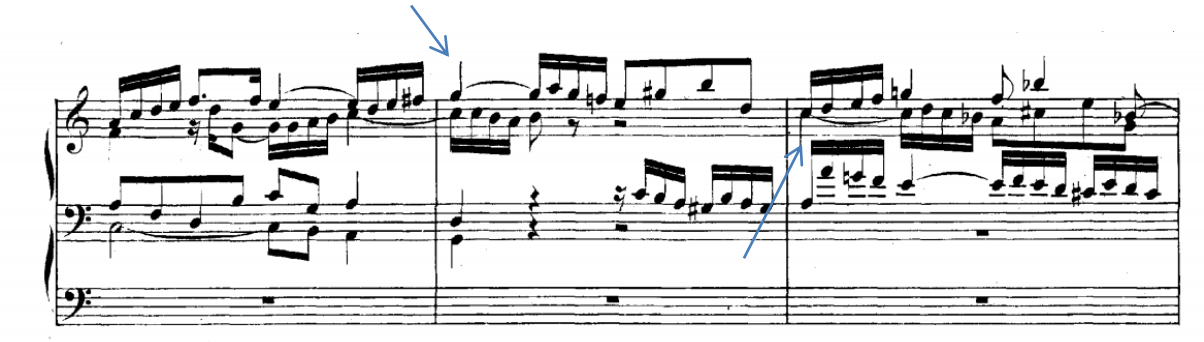
The first substantial episode occurs between bb.23 - 25. It is not free counterpoint at all and it is again meticulously constructed through interlocking sequential ideas mapped out through each bar.

Illustration No.203 – BWV 547 (ii) – bb. 22 – 25.



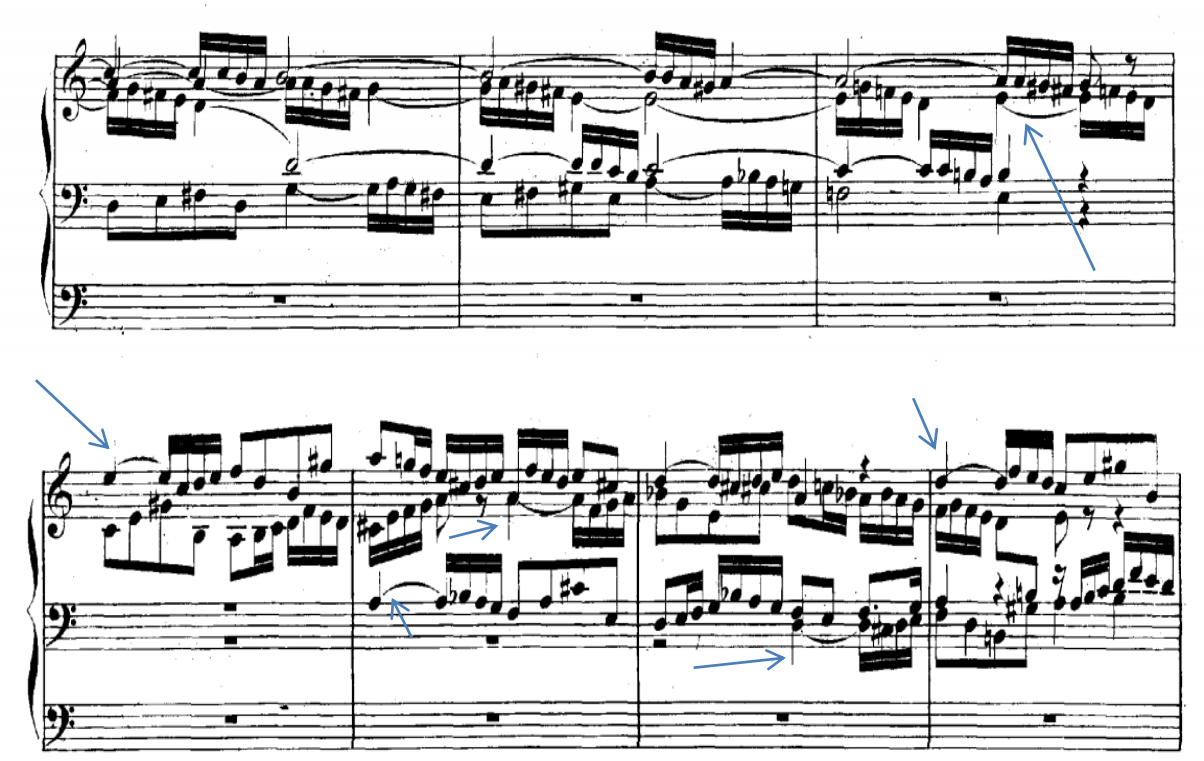
There is a clear arrival onto the dominant at b.27. Bach uses tonal regions as a contrapuntal structural plan. It is no coincidence that having arrived at the dominant, Bach changes tack temporarily by introducing the inversion of the subject as the only form of subject entry for the successive eight bars.

Illustration No.204 – BWV 547 (ii) – bb. 26 – 28.



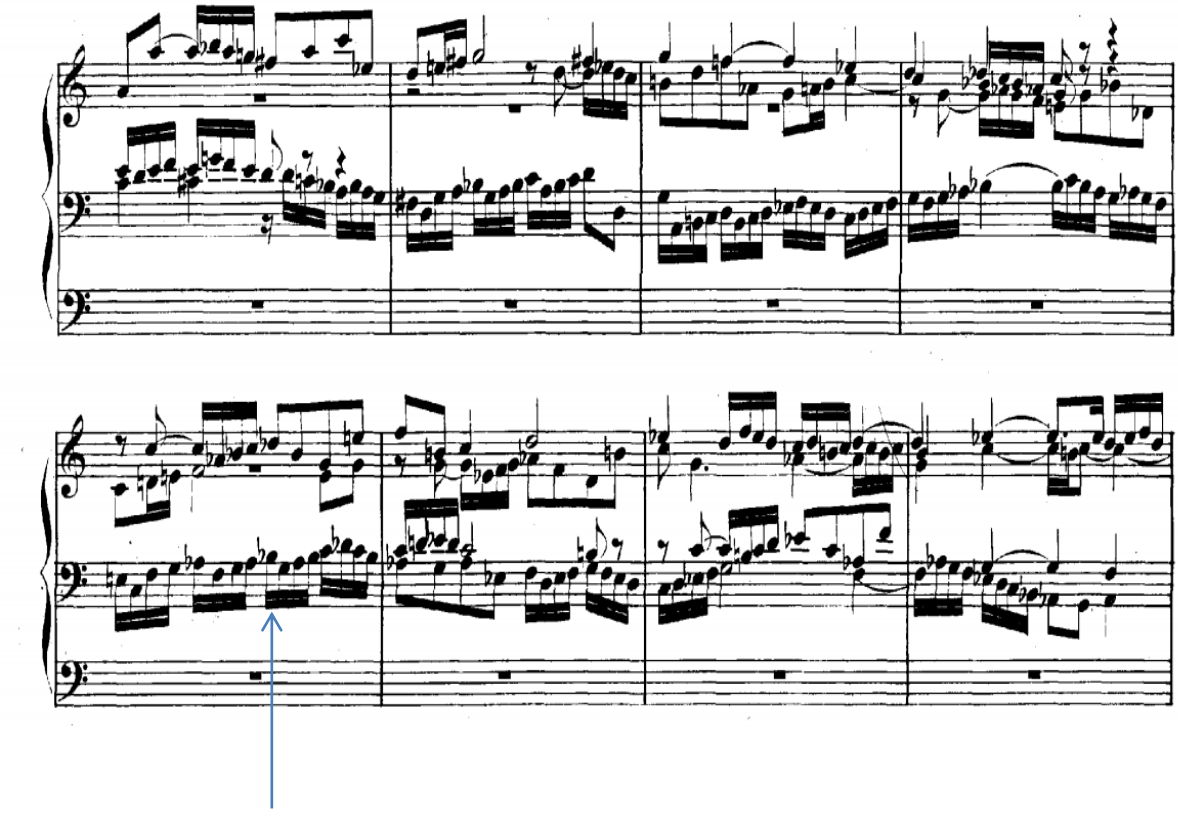
In a similar manner, having reached A Minor (relative minor) at b.35, Bach now combines both *rectus* and the inverted forms of the subject.

Illustration No.205 – BWV 547 (ii) – bb. 32- 38.



From bb.37- 45, there is a fairly rapid succession of entries all of which are stated through remote keys. As such, the tonal centre cannot be defined as there is not one bar which rests in any distinct key. At b.38, the tonal area appears to be D Minor before going through the implied harmonies of A Minor, G Minor, C Minor and F Minor in the space of eight bars. It is also worth mentioning how much ambiguity Bach creates – the lack of tonal stability ultimately shows a great deal of control as Bach is constantly manipulating not only the logical harmonic direction but also, he is in perfect control of how every note functions. The passage purely between bb.42- 44 provides a fitting testimony; there is a temporary deviation even through the implied harmony of Bb Minor at b.43 (3rd beat).

Illustration No.206 – BWV 547 (ii) – bb. 39 – 46.



Bach's divergence to more distant tonal regions is not purely for effect, for the very sense of remoteness is to enhance the sense of anticipation of the imminent pedal entry. As if to emphasise the arrival of the pedal entry, Bach delays the pedal entry by the inclusion of a further improvisational gestural device (not dissimilar to the return of the Passacaglia theme in the pedal in BWV 582 – b. 129), namely a reference at b. 49 to the opening chorale prelude in the *Orgelbüchlein* – *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland* BWV 599. This connection is purely conjectural, but its similarity is undeniable; moreover, its expectant position in the fugue surely makes reference to the long wait

through Advent for Christ the Saviour. Whilst of course one cannot say that this is definitely symbolic of the Christmas story, it is nonetheless a plausible idea in the context when considering Bach's approach to conveying religious ideas through music.

Illustration No. 207 a – BWV 599 – b.1

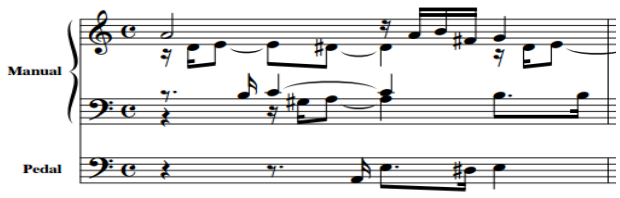
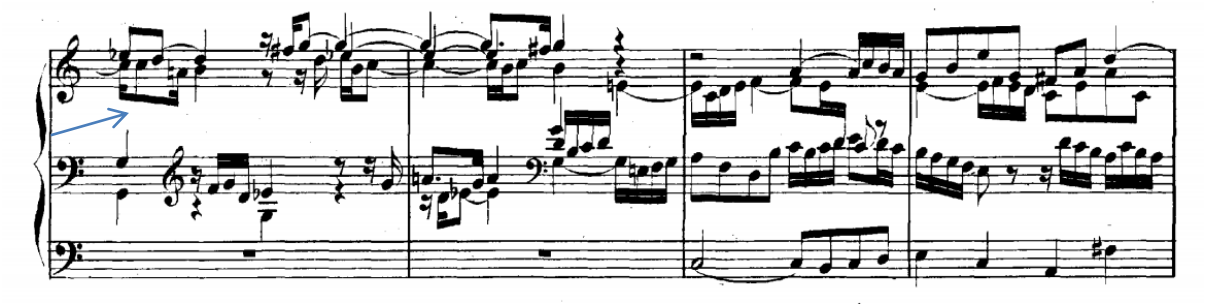
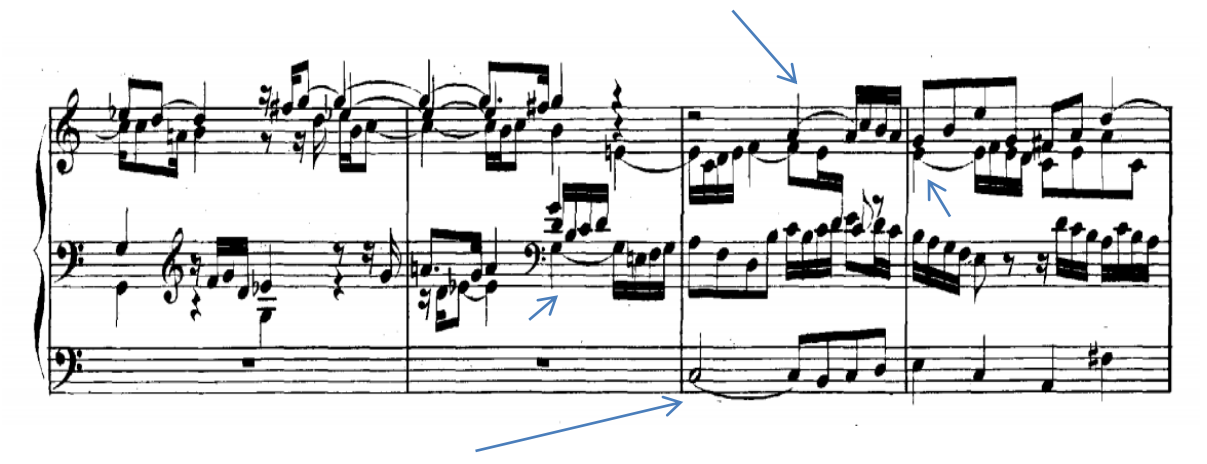


Illustration No.207 b – BWV 547 (ii) – bb. 47 – 50.



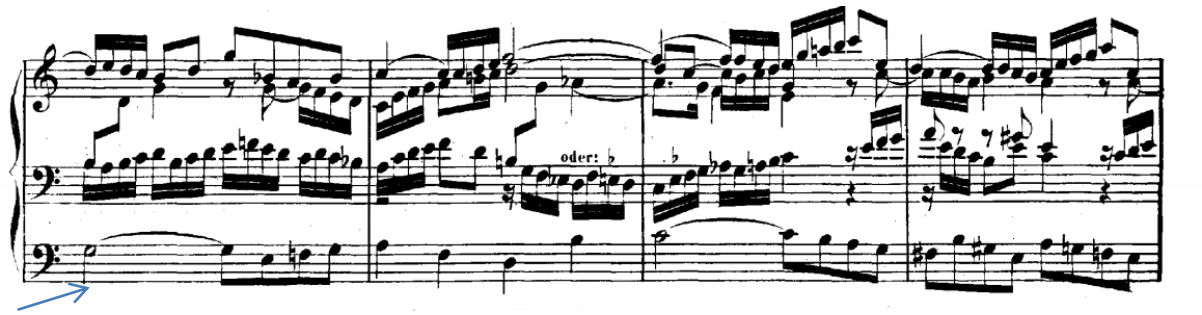
The occurrence of the pedal entry at the end of BWV 547(ii) is one of the most climactic events in all of Bach's organ fugues in that the composer chose to treat the pedal as a special effect rather, as in all other fugues for the instrument, where the pedals were an intrinsic and recurring feature of the design. Indeed, the sense of climax at this juncture is not only created by the effect on the new register and by the augmentation of the fugal subject but also because Bach adds an entirely new voice to the formerly four-part texture. At the same time in the upper voices in the manuals at b.49, the *rectus* and *inversus* forms are used above the augmentation.

Illustration No.208 – BWV 547 (ii) – bb. 47 – 50.



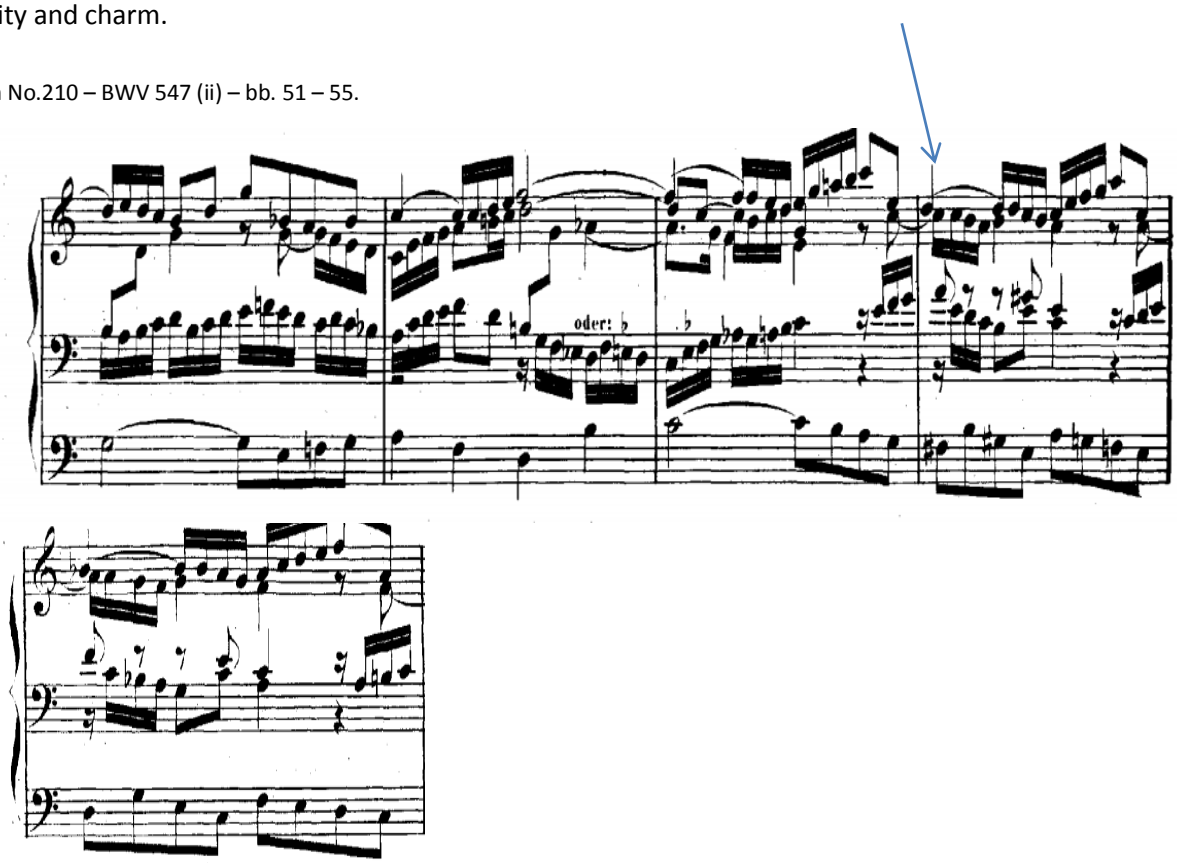
Such unification of themes is of course a hallmark of Bach's quest of thematic identity. A feature which is a cross reference to the B Minor fugue BWV 544 (ii) is the notion of the pedal stating an entry immediately after another. At b.51 in the pedal, the answer form is presented in augmentation too.

Illustration No.209 – BWV 547 (ii) – bb. 51- 54.



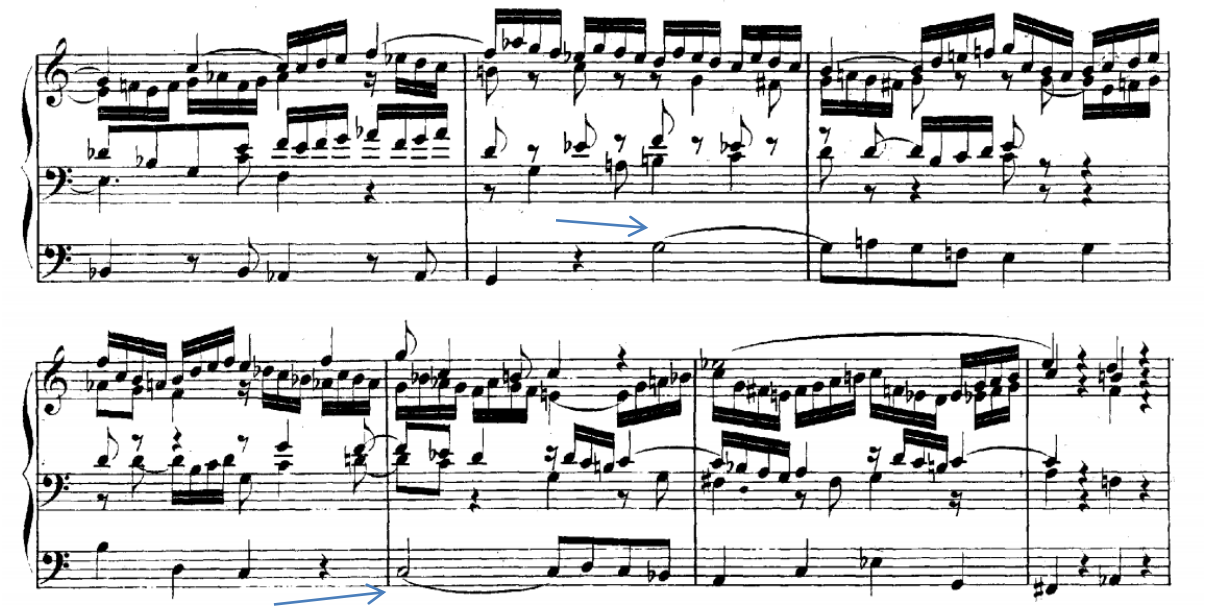
At bb.54 – 55, there is again another meticulously crafted episode. There is no question of the fact that even what were generally regarded as areas of free counterpoint, in this case, Bach saw it also necessary for these to be constructed methodically. However, it never sounds though there is a strong mathematical element involved. Bach had a unique ability to combine construction, complexity and charm.

Illustration No.210 – BWV 547 (ii) – bb. 51 – 55.



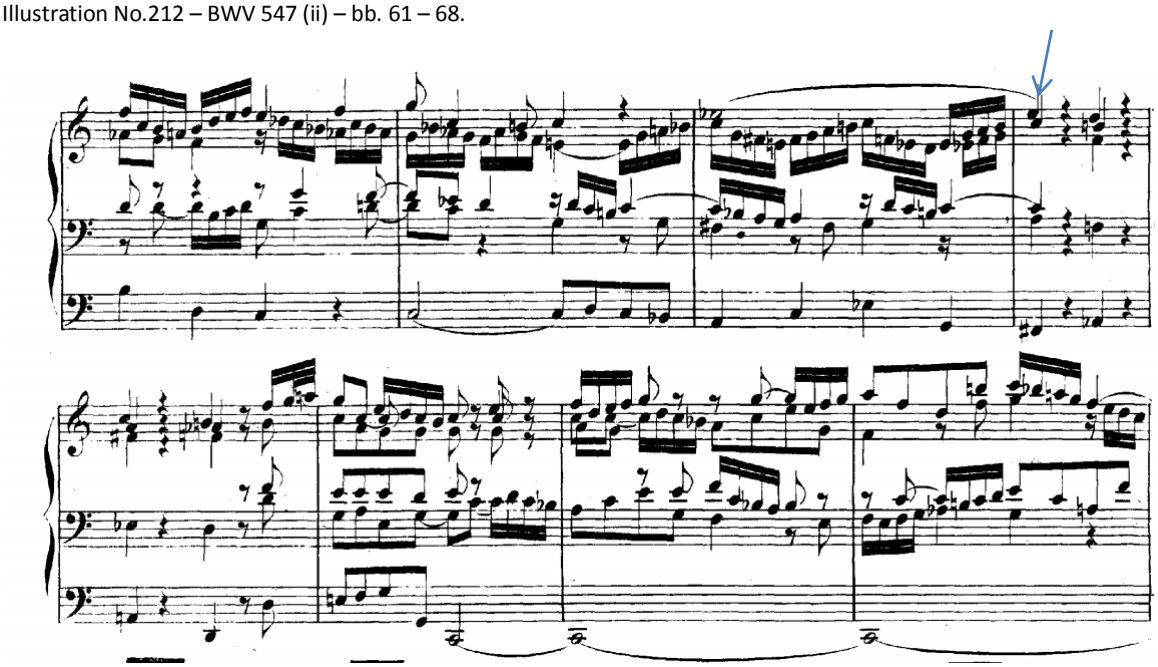
From b.59, there is a gradual sense of contrapuntal saturation from which there is a decline towards a sense of final resolution. It is noteworthy that there is not one *full* subject entry in the manuals from bb.59-64. The only exception to this is that of the two pedal entries – both of which use the inverted augmented form.

Illustration No.211 – BWV 547 (ii) – bb. 58 – 64.



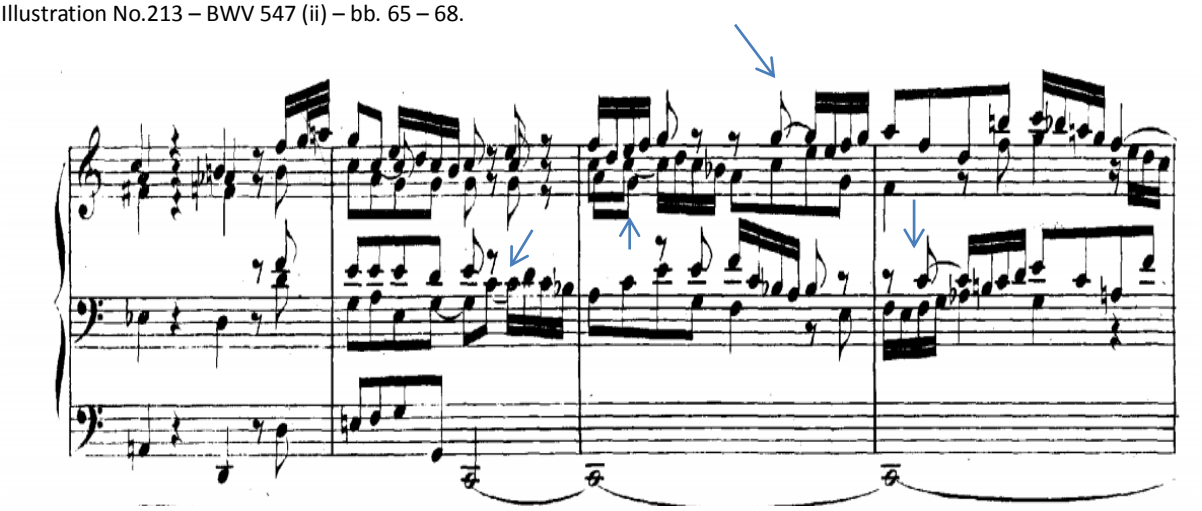
At bb.64-65, there is a most curious halt to proceedings by means of successive diminished seventh chords. It is though resolution must be sought, but in a manner more common to a 'modern' concerto grosso rather than the old style of *stretto* fugue.

Illustration No.212 – BWV 547 (ii) – bb. 61 – 68.



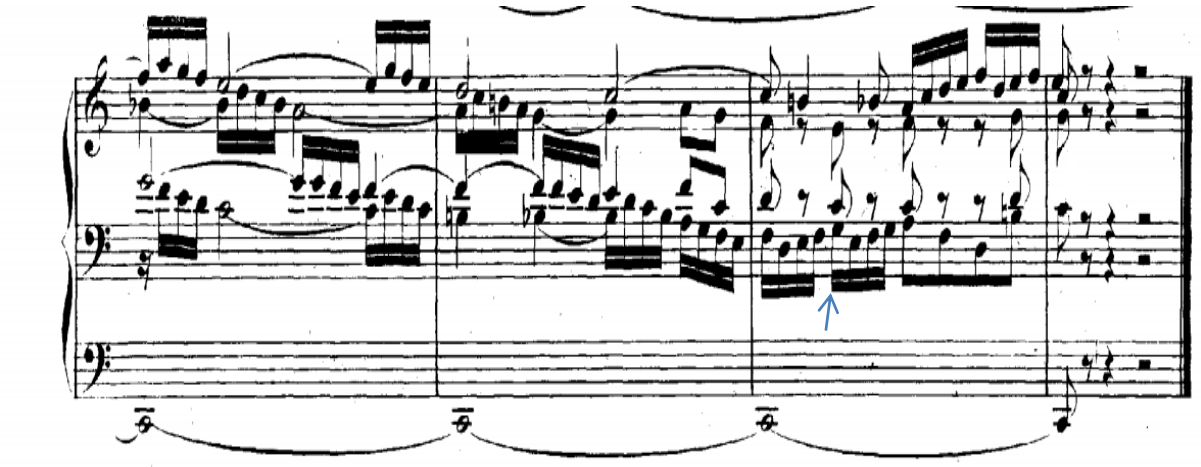
What follows is a formidable intensified *stretto* using both *rectus* and *inversus* over a long sustained tonic pedal.

Illustration No.213 – BWV 547 (ii) – bb. 65 – 68.



The final four bars represent a resolution to the seeming harmonic and contrapuntal complexity. The descending sequence at bb.69-70 offers perhaps a glimpse of the antiphonal heavenly host before one final statement of the subject in the bass at b.71.

Illustration No.214 – BWV 547 (ii) – bb. 69 – 72.



Conclusion

The purpose of systematically examining each of the fourteen fugues selected in this thesis has been to recognise a number of crucial factors in the evolution of Bach's fugal style: the evolution of his concept of structural form in his fugal writing; the increasing intricacy of his contrapuntal thinking; the sheer variety of styles in which Bach applied the stricture of fugue, as well as fugue being a vehicle of religious expression. Fugue, as a term and a compositional style, is so often understood as a generic formal idea and has connotations of possessing rudimentary and even mundane processes. Yet one has only to examine the radically varying structural procedures within these fourteen examples to see how they abundantly illustrate the vast spectra of styles with which fugue manifested itself in Bach's music; and, of course, this is merely a glimpse of the capability within the composer's larger corpus of fugues. Some are of considerable length, others are miniatures. However, as becomes increasingly evident with Bach's intellectual maturity, it is the *intricacy* of fugal process which ultimately sums up the composer's uniquely prodigious craftsmanship and how this gave rise to a series of extraordinary structural creations.

Unlike any other collection of music by Bach, the organ works and the respective fugues allow the interpreter to witness the change in attitude and style over almost fifty years of Bach's career. The early fugues from this thesis, namely BWV 531 (ii) and BWV 579 owe much to the style of Bach's forefathers. In the case of BWV 531 (ii), the influence of Pachelbel and Buxtehude is abundantly evident. In the case of BWV 579, the influence of Corelli and that of the trio – sonata texture is undoubtedly clear. Despite both being early works, they are completely different by nature to the extent that one could justifiably say they are by two different hands. Both BWV 536 (ii) and BWV 565 (ii) have long been cast into the shadow of not being authentic. Certainly, both exhibit potential weaknesses, but these are only weaknesses by comparison with the late masterpieces of Bach; they are not at all weak from the aspect of fugal compositions showing a striking trait of originality or indeed do they show any aspect of being 'flawed' compositions. It is true that they lack the sophisticated contrapuntal complexity but they by no means lack flair and they do exhibit noteworthy craftsmanship worthy of a formidable mind. Moreover, it is fair to say that several analysts have glossed over several of the compositional mechanisms and nuances which have not been revealed hitherto.

Both BWV 541 (ii) and BWV 542 (ii), despite being notably different to the aforementioned examples, not least themselves, see a radical change in terms of expanding fugue through the use of tonal structure, embracing concerto form as well as systematically developing thematic ideas

throughout the episodes. The notion of concerto form from the aspect of textural variation and that of an underpinning tonal plan is plainly evident. Furthermore, In the case of BWV 541 (ii), one frequently marvels at how meticulously Bach designed the surrounding 'free' counterpoint to the subject entries. In the case of BWV 542 (ii), one can witness the virtuosic nature of the fugal writing which is not surprising given the likelihood Bach used this as an audition piece in 1720. In both BWV 541 (ii) and 542 (ii), Bach is operating on several different compositional levels and actually, the attention to detail, other than merely how the subject and countersubject(s) operate, is a formidable insight as to how he saw fugal composition as a thoroughgoing and all-encompassing compositional medium. One needs to only examine the wealth of textures, tonal planning and thematic integration to see the multi-dimensional approach to fugal composition.

It is undeniable that both BWV 538 (ii) and BWV 582 '*Thema fugatum'* show Bach's almost obsessive notion of contrapuntal command. BWV 538 (ii) through the use of canon not only through the subject entries but also throughout and indeed prolifically during the episodes exhibits a quest for a tightly wrought structure throughout. BWV 582 ultimately confirms such a theory as Bach maintains the regular triple invertible counterpoint ceaselessly. That not one permutation is repeated and each bears a different order further bears witness to the esoteric design. Both fugues are of course substantial in length and it is no doubt fair to say that Bach intended to convey such contrapuntal command over a large-scale course. Furthermore, with these fugues in particular, Bach incorporates a sense of climax within and there is an undeniable sense of compositional evolution.

Fugue takes on a further new mantle throughout *Clavier Übung III* as both religious symbolisms and varying scales of proportion and texture become paramount. In the case of BWV 674, it is undoubtedly a miniature but an overwhelmingly complex work based on the *Kyrie* chant and is a *stretto* fugue. BWV 685 is also a miniature but an absolutely vivid portrayal of Christ's baptism. The Duet BWV 804 is a rare example of a two-part fugue but despite being labelled 'Duet', fugal paradigms and processes are abundant through the use of textural invertibility and that of a recurring countersubject. Bach's Lutheranism and religious affirmation could not be expressed more acutely by the Trinitarian design of BWV 552 (ii) – it is an inspired approach and indeed unique.

Both BWV 544 (ii) and BWV 547 (ii) ultimately suggest Bach's quest for contrapuntal saturation. The need in both to derive so much complexity out of so little very much defines Bach's ability to grasp an idea and to see the inner harmonic and contrapuntal potential. In both cases, they represent a distilled thought process which shows absolute authority and an ability to create seamless complexity.

The need for further understanding and interpretation of the organ works is therefore unquestionable. Too long have these works been ignored from the mainstream of Bach scholarship, and while they have become thoroughly well known to generations of organists, they have never fully been appreciated through the process of analysis. Concise attempts in the twentieth century by organists such as Sir Frederick Bridge (1844-1924) or John Dykes–Bower (1905-81) had a very brief influence on the longstanding Novello editions of the organ works through their editorial work and introductory notes in the preface. Nonetheless, statements such as 'the theme of the Passacaglia is subsequently combined with a counter–subject and developed into a double fugue of rare charm and interest'[93] merely open the door for the analyst. Without doubt, this statement immediately initiates the debate on what precisely *is* the 'rare charm and interest' but ultimately, Bach scholarship has been lacking in any detailed perspective of these works.

The saying 'seek and ye will find' is particularly relevant to Bach's music. It is not simply music that reveals itself through merely listening to it or through the analyst looking for surface clues. The true art within the art will only be revealed by those who wish to know what is *in* the music. As such, an extract from the title which Bach conceived for *Clavier Übung III* is particularly appropriate:

Denen Liebhabern, in besonders denen Kennern von dergleichen Arbeit, zur Gemüths Ergezung verfertiget von Johann Sebastian Bach.

['Prepared for music-lovers, particularly for connoisseurs of such work and for the recreation of the spirit, by Johann Sebastian Bach.']

It seems though Bach had intended this quest for those who wished to pursue and unravel the mysteries concealed within his compositions. Of course, the aim of this thesis has been to elucidate a lot of the compositional processes and procedures, there are almost certainly mechanisms on a deeper scale which cannot be explained as one does not know precisely *how* Bach approached the aspect of composition.

Whilst the purpose of this thesis has been to illuminate just fourteen organ fugues by Bach, there is a vast amount of research waiting to be completed for not only the rest of the preludes and fugues but also, the rest of the organ works. The biographical and analytical quality of literature varies considerably regarding their individual relevance to understanding the organ works. Of course, Peter Williams' editions (the original of 1980 and then the revised edition in 2003) of the *Cambridge Companion to the Organ Works of J.S. Bach* are highly meritorious in their aims; nonetheless, perhaps by dint of available space, they fail to go into substantial detail. Of course, is such detail

[93] J.S. Bach Organ Works – Novello, Vol. 10 Preface

necessary? For most it is probably not. But then again Bach is not a composer whose music can simply be whittled down to simple ideas and processes: it is music which requires a detailed interpretation and understanding. As the German organist Helmut Walcha (1907-91) once said, 'Bach opens a vista to the Universe. After experiencing him, people feel there is meaning to life after all.'

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p.10 – BWV 537 (ii)

Editor Pierre Gouin

Publisher Info. Montréal: Les Éditions Outremontaises, 2007

pp.11-12 – BWV 574

Editor Ernst Naumann (1832–1910)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 38

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1891. Plate B.W. XXXVIII.

pp.23-24 – BWV 542 (i)

Editor Wilhelm Rust (1822–1892)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 15

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1867. Plate B.W. XV

p.26 – BWV 540 (ii)

Editor Wilhelm Rust (1822–1892)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 15

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1867. Plate B.W. XV.

CHAPTER 1

BWV 531

Editor Wilhelm Rust (1822–1892)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 15

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1867. Plate B.W. XV.

BuxWV 137

Editor Josef Hedar (1894-1960)

Publisher Info. Copenhagen: Wilhelm Hansen, 1952.

Fugue in C Major (Pachelbel)

Editor Max Seiffert (1868-1948)

Publisher Info. Orgelkompositionen, I. Abth., No.33

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1903. Plate D.d.T.i.B. VI.

CHAPTER 2

BWV 579

Editor Ernst Naumann (1832–1910)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 38

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1891. Plate B.W. XXXVIII

Op. 4 No.3 (Corelli)

Editors Joseph Joachim (1831-1907)

Friedrich Chrysander (1826–1901)

Publisher Info. London: Augener & Co., Nos.4936a-e, (1888-1891). Plate 9443

Chromatic Fantasia (Sweelinck)

Editor Alexandre Guilmant (1837-1911)

Publisher Info. Paris: A. Durand, 1900; Plate A.G. 110

Canzon from Fiori Musicali (Frescobaldi)

Editor Pierre Pidoux (1905-2001)

Publisher Info. Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1955. Plate BA 2205.

CHAPTER 3

BWV 565 (p.63)

(J.Ringk Copy - Berlin State Library, D-B Mus. ms. Bach P595. Fascicle 8 (pp.57-64)

BWV 565

Editor Wilhelm Rust (1822–1892)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 15

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1867. Plate B.W. XV

BWV 227

Editor Fritz Brodersen

Publisher Info. Fritz Brodersen

BWV 575

Editor Ernst Naumann (1832–1910)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 38

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1891. Plate B.W. XXXVIII.

Prelude and Fugue in D Minor (Peter Kellner)

Editor Pierre Gouin

Publisher Info. Montréal: Les Éditions Outremontaises, 2013.

Toccata and Fugue in A Minor (Johan Ludwig Krebs)

Editor Patrick Roose

Publisher Info. Patrick Roose, 2011

Fugue in D Minor (Wilhelm Friedmann Bach)

Editor Carl de Nys (1917-96)

Noëlie Pierront (1899-1988 or 1990)

Publisher Info. Paris: Editions Musicales de la Schola Cantorum, n.d.(1960?). Plate S. 5706 P.

CHAPTER 4

BWV 536 (ii)

Editor Wilhelm Rust (1822–1892)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 15

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1867. Plate B.W. XV

BWV 869 (ii)

Editor Carl Czerny (1791–1857)

Publisher Info. New York: G. Schirmer, 1893. Plate 11015.

CHAPTER 5

BWV 542 (ii)

Editor Wilhelm Rust (1822–1892)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 15

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1867. Plate B.W. XV

CHAPTER 6

BWV 541 (ii)

Editor Wilhelm Rust (1822–1892)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 15

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1867. Plate B.W. XV

BWV 1052

Editor Wilhelm Rust (1822–1892)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 17 (pp.1-42, 275-313)

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1869. Plate B.W. XVII.

CHAPTER 7

BWV 538

Editor Wilhelm Rust (1822–1892)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 15

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1867. Plate B.W. XV

BWV 680

Editor Carl Ferdinand Becker (1804–1877)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 3

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1853. Plate B.W. III.

BWV 682

Editor Carl Ferdinand Becker (1804–1877)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 3

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1853. Plate B.W. III.

CHAPTER 8

BWV 582 (p.136)

c.1720-1739, by Carl August Hartung, organist in Cöthen; Bach's manuscript is lost

BWV 582

Editor Wilhelm Rust (1822–1892)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 15

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1867. Plate B.W. XV.

BWV 680

Editor Carl Ferdinand Becker (1804–1877)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 3

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1853. Plate B.W. III.

BWV 1004

Editor Alfred Dörffel (1821–1905)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 27

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1879. Plate B.W. XXVII.

BWV 599

Editor Pierre Gouin

Publisher Info. Montréal: Les Éditions Outremontaises, 2008

(Illustrations No.146 (extract from BuxWV 160) and No.147 (extract from Chaconne in D Minor, J.Pachelbel) are from:

Peter Williams, The Organ Music of J.S. Bach Vol.1, Cambridge Studies in Music (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980): p.255

BWV 540

Editor Wilhelm Rust (1822–1892)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 15

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1867. Plate B.W. XV.

CHAPTER 9

BWV 674

Editor Carl Ferdinand Becker (1804–1877)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 3

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1853. Plate B.W. III.

CHAPTER 10

BWV 685

Editor Carl Ferdinand Becker (1804–1877)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 3

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1853. Plate B.W. III.

CHAPTER 11

BWV 805

Editor Carl Ferdinand Becker (1804–1877)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 3

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1853. Plate B.W. III.

BWV 855 (ii)

Editor Franz Kroll (1820–1877)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 14

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1866. Plate B.W. XIV.

CHAPTER 12

BWV 552 (ii)

Editor Thomas A. Schneider

Publisher Info. Thomas A. Schneider (2010)

BWV 679

Editor Carl Ferdinand Becker (1804–1877)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 3

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1853. Plate B.W. III.

CHAPTER 13

BWV 544 (ii)

Editor Wilhelm Rust (1822-1892)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 15

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1867. Plate B.W. XV

CHAPTER 14

BWV 547 (ii)

Editor Wilhelm Rust (1822–1892)

Publisher Info. Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe, Band 15

Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1867. Plate B.W. XV.

BWV 599

Editor Pierre Gouin

Publisher Info. Montréal: Les Éditions Outremontaises, 2008.